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FRENCH'S  
AMERICAN DRAMA.

NO. 25.



THE

GAME OF LIFE.

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS,

BY JOHN BROUGHAM, ESQ.

*With Cast of Characters, Stage Business, Costumes, Relative  
Positions, etc. etc.*



AS PERFORMED AT WALLACK'S THEATRE.



NEW-YORK :

SAMUEL FRENCH,

121 NASSAU-STREET.

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FRENCH'S  
AMERICAN DRAMA.

The Acting Edition.

No. XXV.

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GAME OF LIFE.

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY JOHN BROUGHAM, ESQ.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A Description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—  
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the  
Stage Business.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty-Six, by John Brougham,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of New York.

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NEW-YORK :  
SAMUEL FRENCH,  
121 NASSAU-STREET.

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1856  
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### Cast of the Characters,

AS ORIGINALLY PERFORMED AT WALLACK'S THEATRE, N. Y.

<i>Adam Greenleaf,</i>	- - - - -	Mr. Blake.
<i>Rupert Wolfe,</i>	- - - - -	" Lester.
<i>Dr. Chatterton Drake,</i>	- - - - -	" Brougham.
<i>Meyer Shadow,</i>	- - - - -	" Walcot.
<i>Mr. Smiler,</i>	- - - - -	" Dyott.
<i>Grimm,</i>	- - - - -	" Rea.
<i>Mr. Littell Wyndham,</i>	- - - - -	Mrs. Stephens.
<i>Widow Joybell,</i>	- - - - -	" Brougham.
<i>Rose Greenleaf,</i>	- - - - -	" Conway.
<i>Mrs. Smiler,</i>	- - - - -	" Cramer.
<i>Matilda Smiler,</i>	- - - - -	Miss Fanny Deane.

(Game of Life.)

A.M. 10 Aug. 27.

**Costume.—Present Time.**

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GREENLEAF.—Dress of a country gentleman.

WOLFE.—Ragged, but picturesque. (A returned gold-digger.)

DRAKE.—Suit of black, cloak, &c.

SHADOW.—*First*: Fashionable dress suit. *Second*: Walking dress.

SMILER.—Suit of black, sober cut.

GRIMM.—black coat, gray trousers, and gaiters.

WYNDHAM.—*First*: Evening dress. *Second*: Walking suit. *Third*: Dressing-gown, cap, &c.

MATILDA.—Very juvenile. *First*: Ball dress. *Second*: Home dress.

ROSE.—*First*: Walking dress, plain. *Second*: White home dress.

MRS. SMILER.—*First*: Full dress. *Second*: Home dress.

WIDOW JOYBELL.—*First*: Full dress. *Second*: Home dress.

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**STAGE DIRECTIONS.**

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**EXITS AND ENTRANCES.**

L. means *First Entrance, Left*. R. *First Entrance, Right*. S. E. L. *Second Entrance, Left*. S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right*. U. E. L. *Upper Entrance, Left*. U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right*. C. *Centre*. L. C. *Left of Centre*. R. C. *Right of Centre*. T. E. L. *Third Entrance, Left*. T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right*. C. D. *Centre Door*. D. R. *Door Right*. D. L. *Door Left*. U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left*. U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right*.

\* \* \* *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.*

(Game of Life.)



# THE GAME OF LIFE.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Octagonal Room.—On one side a Ball Room, on the other a Supper-Room.—A small Conservatory in c.—Music as Curtain rises.—SMILER and GRIMM discovered.*

*Smiler.* Here, my old friend and partner, we can be alone for a few moments.

*Grimm.* Pooh! Don't call me friend! You know you don't feel it, for I have warned you too often; but I suppose those smooth-tongued flatterers, by whom you are usually surrounded, are more agreeable to listen to. I presume you know that you are on the verge of ruin!

*Smiler.* Certainly—have known it for some time.

*Grimm.* And yet we are not out of the sound of the expensive music with which you are tickling the ears of your fashionable friends, not one of whom would stretch forth a finger to save you if you were up to your throat in a mill stream!

*Smiler.* Would any other?

*Grimm.* I don't know that they would—still, you needn't fling away money upon them.

*Smiler.* Bless your soul! I have no money to fling away!

*Grimm.* Bills will come in some time or another.

*Smiler.* When they do, it will be time enough to provide for them.

*Grimm.* There's a heavy account for wine come in, together with sharp hints from sundry jewellers and other indispensable leeches.

*Smiler.* They must be paid!

*Grimm.* A new carriage ordered—surely that is needless?

*Smiler.* Good heavens! you don't suppose I could allow Mrs. Smiler to walk?

*Grimm.* It's my opinion she'll soon learn the way!

*Smiler.* Anything else?

*Grimm.* Yes, indeed, a whole host of small tradesmen's bills.

*Smiler.* This is no time or place to talk on such matters. They must wait!

*Grimm.* And yet they need it most.

*Smiler.* Can't be helped!

*Grimm.* Ah! rotten—all rotten! I wish I had remained your clerk, for then, whatever I might have thought, I had no right to

talk! I had only to do my duty, and keep my regrets to myself! How is all this going to end?

*Smiler.* How the deuce do I know! So much the better—the very uncertainty gives excitement to existence. But don't be alarmed, you old croaker! Tilly may, indeed she must, marry a wealthy man.

*Grimm.* I know you consider that sweet child only as so much merchandize. You might as well put her up at public auction at once. Do you suppose people don't notice the way you look—who'll bid for this superior lot?

*Smiler.* Every body hasn't got such a day-book and ledger-mind as you! Besides, there's my rich uncle Greenleaf, I know that he has made a will in my favor!

*Grimm.* Lord! Haven't you seen the paper?

*Smiler.* What paper?

*Grimm.* Why, the account of his marriage with a young wife, Miss Somebody or another.

*Smiler.* Is it possible? The confounded old fool! So, so, this is bad news, indeed!

[*Laughter within, U. E. R.*]

*Grimm.* Ah! shout away, you thoughtless butterflies! When this flower has faded away, you can flit just as pleasantly about the next! [*To Smiler.*] You've nothing to say to me, I suppose?

*Smiler.* Nothing, you confounded old hedgehog, but bring me better news the next time you come. Won't you go into the drawing-room?

*Grimm.* No, thank you. I'm not a hot-house blossom! There's nothing of the dandy about me!

*Smiler.* Not a particle, I must confess!

*Grimm.* But I've got a heart. I didn't know it while I was a plodding clerk, but the moment you gave me the right to think about you, I felt for you, though I don't know why I should, for you don't seem to care much about yourself, and I won't do it any more!

*Smiler.* Oh yes you will!

*Grimm.* I won't!

[*Exit GRIMM, L. 2 E.*]

*Smiler.* Don't I care about myself! Ha! ha! You're very much mistaken, my rusty friend! This is a terrible blow—this marriage of old Greenleaf's! I must consult with Mrs. S. Some means must be devised!

*Enter SHADOW, R. H. arch.*

*Shadow.* Have you seen Drake? I have something delicious to communicate to him, and I know I shall forget it if I don't see him soon! Stop, I may as well tell you. Capital! It will make you die of laughing! You know old what's-his-name, of—never mind the place, that doesn't matter—well, he—well, that's very remarkable! Dear me! Just let me consider a moment—ah! it's gone, but it was glorious! But, apropos, why do you keep yourself away? We are positively in despair without you!

*Smiler.* Urgent business must be my excuse. Interminable bore! but rich, and struck with Tilly! [*Aside.*] You are not going away, are you!

*Shadow.* Alluding to the hat? Oh, no, not for some time! Our set always carry their hats into the drawing-room—it serves a double purpose. Firstly, it keeps those awkward extremities, one's hands, employed. Secondly, there's no fear of getting an inferior beaver!

*Smiler.* How is the evening progressing?

*Shadow.* Oh, deliciously drowsy, and correctly apathetic! The singing people are in great force, but nobody listens to them—that is to say, nobody in our set! We never pay attention to any thing but celebrities. Talent which commands an extravagant price, we are always proud to acknowledge!

*Smiler.* Although there may be as much promise amongst the lesser luminaries.

*Shadow.* That's no affair of ours! There are newspaper people enough to discover those—it's the business of the gardener to nurture and prepare the bouquets, we wear them, and take his word for the quality of the flowers.

*Enter Mrs. SMILER, R. H. arch.*

*Mrs. S.* [*down c.*] Ah! there you are, truant cavalier! The ladies are absolutely dying for your return!

*Shadow.* Poor dear souls! I attend the blissful summons!

*Smiler.* The sun is more welcome after cloudy weather!

*Shadow.* Weather—sun! I don't precisely—

*Smiler.* Merely a metaphorical remark!

*Shadow.* Ah! I see. I thought it was a quotation from—ah—begins—bless me! that's very odd! ha—a capital thing, full of thought! Well, it's gone! Very strange, whenever I want to recollect a particular matter, the deuced thing won't come! Curious, aint it?

*Mrs. S.* Stapleton, dear, you have also been greatly missed.

*Smiler.* You flatter me, darling!

*Mrs. S.* They are just going to have the last German cotillion.

*Shadow.* Then I must be off! Wouldn't miss that for the world!

[*Music—German Quadrille.—Exit, dancing, R. H. arch.*]

*Mrs. S.* Well, dear!

*Smiler.* Stuff! Stop that nonsense now! there's no one here!

*Mrs. S.* Oh, true! well, I've come to give you a delightful piece of intelligence, I have just received.

*Smiler.* There, don't be mysterious, I've heard all about it! Green-leaf's married!

*Mrs. S.* Pleasant, isn't it? and to that rustic piece of simplicity, Rose May! A fine match for her!

*Smiler.* And for us! these parties will have to be given up.

*Mrs. S.* Don't be an idiot, Smiler! They are now more important than ever! Tilly must be provided for; besides, this is not the time for you to compromise your respectability.

*Smiler.* Respectability! oh, that's sufficiently established! Don't we patronise the most distingué church? Don't I subscribe to the most fashionable charities? Don't I read, I mean take in, the most unexceptionable newspapers? But it is here that some change must be effected—the house expenses must be diminished.



*Mrs. S.* With all my heart, when you give up your extravagant out of door lunches and suppers.

*Smiler.* Mrs. Smiler, I must impress upon you this fact, that I do not suffer my actions to be commented upon!

*Mrs. S.* If you really wish to retrench, set the example yourself!

*Smiler.* Madam, once for all, allow me to observe, that such remarks are impertinent!

*Enter* DRAKE, L. H. D. 2 E.

*Drake.* [*aside.*] Aha! a tiff! I thought it wasn't all honey! There you are, billing and cooing, like a pair of mock turtle doves. Excuse the remark, and pardon the intrusion. Just going round to pick up a few items. By the bye, I have such a bit of fun to tell you!

*Smiler.* Of course you have, Drake; always so entertaining! Confound you! [*aside.*] Sally dear!

*Mrs. S.* Yes, darling!

*Drake.* [*aside.*] Gammon!

*Smiler.* Return to our guests, love, while Drake and I have a little social chat.

[*Exit* MRS. SMILER, R. H. U. E.]

*Drake.* [*sees* MRS. SMILER *out.*] What's the matter with you? surely there's something on your mind! Dull season, eh? Failures about, business fishy—you'll excuse the remark!

*Smiler.* Oh dear, no! the height of our busiest time!

*Drake.* Upon my life, I'm glad to hear it! was almost afraid to touch upon the subject! I heard so many malicious whispers about you on change. All false? I thought so, I said so, took your part famously! Told all the grumblers what first rate parties you gave, the lavish expenditure, and exquisite taste of your home! I made it all right, you may depend upon it! To be sure, one or two of the unconscionable rascals said the money might be better applied—as if it could be! Ha! ha! queer world, Smiler! folks will talk—no stopping people's tongues!

*Smiler.* Very true indeed, Doctor! How entertaining you are!

*Drake.* I'm glad to hear you say that. [*music.*] Ha, you have friends!—pity my time is so much occupied, I should so like to have made one.

*Smiler.* It would have given me much pleasure.

*Drake.* Would it? I live only for my friends, you'll excuse me. [*rings bell.*] I know I can make myself at home here. [*enter servant.*] Ah! James, looking quite well—let me see, 9 o'clock—when shall I tell him to come? well, say 3. You wont keep it up much longer, and I never like to wear out my welcome. What are you thinking about? Greenleaf, perhaps. Now, having cheered you up a little, I must go and see who you've got here. [*goes up.*] Ah, Shadow, is that you? how are you? I wonder you have that scandal-bearer at your house: I wouldn't if I were you. Ah, Shadow, glad to see you looking so well.

[*Exit*, U. E. R. H.]

*Smiler.* I'll join you presently! You confounded, chattering marplot! that fellow's breath is a moral pestilence—no one is safe from him! It's postively infamous in society to tolerate such blighters of

reputation! Let me consider now what's best to be done? This old dotard must be made to repent the foolish step he has taken, but how? to fix suspicion upon her would be the surest way. Age is credulous and exacting, she is young and unsuspecting! that must be my plan of action! In self-defence all means are justifiable, and there's always a way of warping the most innocent actions! What a malicious scoundrel that Drake is! Now for the world's mask again.

*Enter MRS. SMILER and MATILDA.*

*Smiler.* What's the matter?

*Mrs. S.* Nothing. Don't interfere, if you please!

*Smiler.* Certainly not; it's no affair of mine.

[*Exit, U. E. R. H.*]

*Matilda.* I declare, mamma, I couldn't help it! Frank so pressed me.

*Mrs. S.* Why, are you aware who he is, child? He hasn't sixpence in the world, and you are now of an age to know that you shouldn't look, act, or speak, without a motive! Ah! if I had had the benefit of such good counsel when I was your age, my present position would be far different! Look at your face! quite flushed, I declare; and your hair all in disorder! and for whom? A nobody! I'm ashamed of you!

*Matil.* Nobody, ma! I'm sure he's very good-looking!

*Mrs. S.* Don't talk nonsense, but listen attentively to me. You are very handsome, child, and as far as such flimsy matters go, accomplished. You have been trained to become a rich man's wife, purposely. What useful thing in the world can you do? Positively nothing! Therefore you see it's absolutely impossible for you to think of a position in life wherein you may be called upon to assist yourself in any way.

*Matil.* But, ma, suppose my heart should be touched?

*Mrs. S.* Good heavens! what is the girl talking about? *Heart*, my dear? there's no such thing, except in books, and very young people! You must really be above such childishness. Here are the beaux! Go, love, to your room; be a good child; put a little white on your face, and come in naturally. Depend upon it, all I say, is for your good. Were society differently constituted, we might talk of *hearts*, but everything is artificial here, darling, and we must regulate our notions accordingly!

*Matil.* Yes, ma! Dear me! I'm so hungry! I wish it were supper-time!

*Mrs. S.* Why, you wouldn't think of eating before people. Fie! fie! Go and satisfy your appetite now, and at supper-time, you will be able to dally with the side-bone of a partridge. A sufficiency of food, I grant you, is wholesome, and indeed necessary for some constitutions; but as you value my good opinion, never let any one see you eat! Ladies should never be suspected of anything so gross.

*Matil.* I'll take a good slice, I tell you, ma, for my appetite is terribly unladylike!

[*Exit, 2 E. R.*]

*Mrs. S.* What a heavy responsibility rests upon the mother of an unmarried daughter of limited means. [WYNDHAM *heard without.*]

Here comes five thousand-a-year, embellishing an exquisite specimen of baby manhood. The down scarcely on his lip—yet he affects the follies and the vices of adolescence! Apropos—he and Tilly are nearly of an age—it never occurred to me before. That must be seen to.

*Enter SHADOW and WYNDHAM, R. H. arch.*

My dear young friend, I trust your time is passing agreeably?

*Wyndham.* And you absent, madam! How can you ask the question! Eh—Shadow? Come—say something deuced clever, and help a fella' out, won't you?

*Shadow.* Just so—that is—I thought Miss Matilda was with you?

*Mrs. S.* She'll be here in a few moments; she's so delicate and ethereal! Poor fragile flower! how she will ever be able to combat with the world, I really don't know!

*Wynd.* Don't be alarmed, my dear madam! What are we creatures of the sterner sex intended for, except to interpose the shield of protection between the assaults of the rude world and those earth-angels!

*Mrs. S.* And yet, in this progressive age, some of those earth-angels, as you call them, would fain bear the shield themselves! What do you think of them, Mr. Shadow?

*Shadow.* Think, my dear madam? That they strangely overrate their own strength, or underrate the world's roughness.

[*Music—polka.*

*Wynd.* Good gracious! look at that extraordinary creature, Widow Joybell! I declare she hasn't done dancing that polka yet! She has tired out two or three partners!

*Shadow.* Who has she victimized now? Drake, as I live! Why, they are coming this way! That's delicious!

*Enter DRAKE and WIDOW, polking, R. H. arch.*

*Drake.* There, I surrender! You've conquered! I haven't another inspiration left!

*Widow.* Ah! you poor, weak, lungless creature, I'm ashamed of you! I must positively look out for another partner.

*Mrs. S.* I'm delighted, my dear, to see you enjoying yourself.

*Wynd.* It really does a fella' good to see such prodigious spirits!

*Shadow.* Positively bewitching! as the poet says: "Sure such a—" Bless me!—something about pears—but no matter.

*Drake.* How much I regret being obliged, by severe indisposition, as the play-bills say, to give you up. You have just time for a few more turns around the room before supper, and here are two unoccupied young gentlemen, who, I have no doubt, would seize upon the occasion with avidity! Come, Shadow—Wyndham!

*Shadow.* Just so, I believe, Wyndham—ah!

*Wynd.* My dear fella'! wouldn't interfere with you for the world!

*Widow.* Come, [*crossing to WYNDHAM.*] I don't care which it is! A thousand pities to let such beautiful music be wasted!



*Drake.* [to SHADOW.] Go along, and use your good fortune discreetly.

*Shadow.* Confound you, Drake, I shall annihilate you for this!

*Widow.* Come, put down your hat; I can't dance if you keep that bobbing about.

*Shadow.* My dear madam, it's the fashion to—ah—

*Widow.* Nonsense! I dance for the fun, not for the fashion. Pshaw! don't set about it as if you were going to have a tooth pulled out! One would suppose dancing was an agony, instead of an amusement!

[*They dance in the Saraco style, once round—SHADOW cries out with pain.*]

*Widow.* Oh! you won't do for me! Here, Wyndham; you have more electricity in your system.

*Wynd.* I would, with pleasure, but just now a bad accident—a sprain—

*Drake.* Sudden and peculiar symptoms; limping on one leg, and rubbing the other. Mrs. S., did you observe anything going on in the drawing-room?—no—not a little flirtation?—no? Well, if I had a young daughter, I should look carefully after her. By-the-bye, curious affair that about Greenleaf—eh? Rather too old to marry, I think: however, that's his affair. Bad business for you, though—you expected a heap there, didn't you? He's uncomfortably rich, isn't he? Ha! ha! Young wife will soon cut into that.

*Widow.* Ah! here comes my bright sunny-eyed little darling, Tilly.

*Enter MATILDA.*

Come along, my love, and let us show those lazy superfluities, the men, that we can do without them.

*Mrs. S.* My dear madam, such unusual gaiety!

*Widow.* Pooh! what are we here for?

*Mrs. S.* I think, Matilda, dear, you should not dance any more—it may injure your health.

*Widow.* What! dancing! ha! ha! Good gracious! look at me! Do I look in bad health?

*Drake.* Hum! Well, if I were called on, professionally—mind, professionally—I should say rather consumptive. I wouldn't needlessly alarm anybody, but there's no harm in a little caution.

*Widow.* Drake, you are a fool!

*Drake.* Of course, I am! Everybody is who gives good advice. By-the-bye, my love, you look rather feverish. What shoes do you wear? Paper soles, I'll be bound! Pride kills more people than poverty. Many a sweet little creature, like you, my love, by sacrificing comfort to vanity, walk into sickness they never get out of. You will excuse the remark.

*Widow.* Now, there, you tiresome people, the dance is over. I declare I don't know what's come to the young men now-a-days! They crawl about as if it were too much trouble to draw a full breath of real wholesome and enjoyable existence.



*Shadow.* Just so! I have frequently remarked that myself. Indeed, the other day, I—ah—what were we talking about?

*Widow.* Pshaw! you're just as bad as any of them.

*Mrs. S.* Tilly, dear, your hair is a little disarranged; come to me [MATILDA crosses to MRS. SMILER.] you thoughtless, silly creature. Quite a child of nature, Mr. Wyndham—unsophisticated as rusticity itself.

*Wynd.* There is no characteristic in the world makes a greater impression upon a man's heart than natural simplicity.

*Mrs. S.* By-the bye, widow, a word with you. Mr. Wyndham, you'll take care of Tilly.

[Retire up—a slight pause between MATILDA and WYNDHAM.]

*Wynd.* What shall we converse about, Miss Smiler?

*Matil.* I don't know.

*Wynd.* What are your favorite tastes?

*Matil.* Candy, for a continuance.

*Wynd.* Indeed!

*Matil.* Yes, and ripe fruit, in season.

*Wynd.* [gives MATILDA grapes and retires up with her.] That's simplicity with a vengeance! [aside.]

*Drake.* [to MRS. SMILER, aside.] Prudent woman! I saw the manœuvre! I see how the land lies! Young Wyndham—only a boy, to be sure, but no matter for that—a perfect continent of wealth, bounded on all sides by rich relations, but they are all healthy. She don't care about him, though—anybody can see that.

*Mrs. S.* What in the name of wonder are you talking about?

*Widow.* When are we going to have supper, good folks? I am aware that it's rather ungenteeled to have an appetite, but nevertheless, I'm positively hungry!

*Servant.* Supper is served.

[Four servants throw open doors—a splendid supper-room seen.]

*Widow.* I declare I'm as good as a time-piece!

*Enter SMILER, R. H. arch.*

*Smiler.* Tell the visitors, James.

*Drake.* There's a display of magnificence! I say, Smiler, you commercial Croesus! I wish some of the grumblers, who swear that you are on the verge of ruin, could see that spread! rather think it would open their eyes! eh, Mrs. S.! But there's no keeping people from chattering, is there?

*Widow.* Why don't you set them an example?

*Drake.* I? well, upon my word, that's good! Bless your soul, I don't say a syllable! I never invented a story in all my life!

*Smiler.* The inventor of a falsehood, or an insinuation which, unnoticed, might have perished at its birth, is not half so reprehensible as he, who takes it up, nurses, and carries it about, until what haply was at first an inadvertent word, becomes a terrible denunciation!

*Drake.* My sentiments exactly! Hollo! what are you about there, interfering with my privilege? Don't you know I am an amateur master of the ceremonies everywhere? I'll see you all pleasantly companioned. Here, Wynny, my boy, take care of Mrs. S. Shadow,

you escort our dear widow—Smiler, you pair off with Mrs. Chatters—I'll take care of little Tilly myself! Now for a delightful evening!

*Music.—All go up to supper—Servants in livery attending.*

ACT DROP.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SMILER'S Parlor—*Folding Doors—Handsome Furniture—SMILER and Mrs. SMILER discovered.*

*Smiler.* Sallie, no remonstrance! self-preservation is the first law of nature. The old fool has robbed us of our right, by marrying at his time of life, and revenge is all we have left!

*Mrs. S.* And yet, I shrink from imagining any thing wrong against her.

*Smiler.* Pooh! such inconsistent connections always lead to unhappy results. The old dotard, and his toy-wife, will be here to-day, according to his letter. It was a good idea of mine to invite him to stay with us.

*Mrs. S.* Stapleton, take care what you do! Remember our own child.

*Smiler.* Pray allow me to attend to our mutual interests in my own way.

*Mrs. S.* Well, you should know best, certainly, but indeed I am greatly uneasy about Tilly lately! There is evidently some secret preying on her mind. She has lost her color, and her appetite, and that beautiful wave is gone out of her hair.

*Smiler.* [*rises.*] Still thinking of that poor idiot, Noble, I suppose. She must be prevented from seeing him; a proper regard for her future welfare demands it.

*Mrs. S.* [*rises.*] My dear, on the contrary, she declared her willingness, the other day, to marry Wyndham, who, you know, has proposed for her.

*Smiler.* Indeed! Let it be carried through, then, before she wavers in her resolution.

*Mrs. S.* Wyndham wishes it to take place at once.

*Smiler.* At once be it!

*Mrs. S.* But surely she must have some time for preparation!

*Smiler.* Nonsense! The main thing is to *hook* the fish! Wyndham is tolerably rich—at all events it will save her from the other. You let her know of it, while I go to the office and see if the ancient Benedick has arrived.

*Enter MATILDA, R. H.*

Ah! Tilly, my darling, how charmingly you look this morning! Your eyes sparkle, as though you anticipated the high destiny which awaits you sooner than you suppose, my girl! But I must away, and wait on our visitor.

[*Exit, c.*

*Mrs. S.* So the day is fixed, Matilda.

*Matil.* Fixed, mother!

*Mrs. S.* Yes, dear! In a few days more, you must lay aside the frivolity of girlhood, wear your hair in bands, and assume the steady propriety of a wedded wife.

*Matil.* A wedded wife, mother! But I don't know whether I love Mr. Wyndham, or not.

*Mrs. S.* Love him! good gracious! what nonsense girls do get into their heads, to be sure! This comes of those incendiary novels! Haven't I told you, over and over again, my dear, that the thing fools call love, is only a mythological piece of nonsense, useful only to poets—just like moonshine, and about as substantial.

*Enter* WIDOW JOYBELL, C. *MATILDA goes up and sits in chair, R. H.*

*Widow.* You don't mind me, I know, so I came in unannounced. Have I disturbed a maternal lecture? If so, pardon me! What's the matter, Tilly, dear? You've been saying something harsh or unjust to this girl. I see it in her face. You'll excuse me!

*Mrs. S.* Far be it from me, my dear widow, to be unjust or harsh to one who is the blossom of my life! Could I, Tilly?

*Widow.* Leading question, as the lawyers say, and I object. Come, Tilly, don't mind me—look upon me as a piece of furniture. There's your mother; to whom should a child tell all her griefs but to her mother? And that you have a volume of grief within your little heart, your face is the index. Let me lend you a tongue. You're in love!

*Matil.* Ma says there's no such thing!

*Widow.* Does she? then she's an infidel! Yes, my dear, there is such a thing as love, and a very tyrannical thing it is—most absolute and despotic! when once it gets firmly rooted, away go all the heart's liberties at once!

*Matil.* [*in chair.*] Oh, how I should glory in— [jumps up.]

*Mrs. S.* Matilda Jane! [MATILDA sits.]

*Widow.* Now do let the girl alone. How you modern modish people seem to dread a natural impulse! Take my advice, my love, and speak your mind. Go on, my dear, what were you going to say?

*Matil.* Well, I was going to say that it must be very nice, when married people love each other!

*Widow.* What in the name of wonder put that in your head?

*Mrs. S.* Why, don't you know she is to be married in a few days?

*Widow.* Married! What! This child married! You'll excuse me. Who is the favored infant?

*Matil.* Young Wyndham, Ma says, but I'd rather have—

*Mrs. S.* Matilda Jane, dear!

*Matil.* Oh! I forgot!

*Widow.* Well, I always speak my mind, to be sure, but I do believe I won't this time! You'll stay at school after you're married, dear, won't you?

*Matil.* Oh, no! Ma wouldn't let me stay the last quarter out, though Ma'amselle said I wasn't quite perfect in my French, and indeed I think my geography might be improved. As for music, I—



*Mrs. S.* Matilda Jane! remember, child, you are no longer a school-girl!

*Widow.* No, poor child, it's a pity she isn't! Tell me, dear—don't mind me!—do you like this boy-intended of yours sufficiently to warrant your risking the happiness of your life in his hands? Can you look up to him with confidence, devotion and respect? Can you give up every thought, feeling, impulse, and inclination to him, and him alone?

*Mrs. S.* What questions to ask a child!

*Widow.* What a position to place a child in, Mrs. S.! Excuse me! Speak out, Tilly!

*Matil.* Well, he's a nice fellow enough; has such a sweet, delicate moustache, and he polks like a little angel!

*Widow.* [*aside.*] The mother's daughter, even as I feared! [*aloud.*] Excellent requisites, if life were a ball-room, Tilly!

*Enter A SERVANT, C.*

*Servant.* [*announcing.*] Mr. Wyndham! [*Exit, C.*

*Enter WYNDHAM, C.*

*Wynd.* [*down L.*] Good morning, ladies!

*Widow.* Bless the boy! What a jump forward the rising generation has made, to be sure!

*Mrs. S.* Won't you sit down, Wyndham?

*Wynd.* Thank you, I'd rather not, at present. I say, mother-in-law that is to be, does that dreadful Widow know my position in the family?

*Mrs. S.* Yes, dear!

*Wynd.* Then why the deuce don't she let a fella' have a chance of a tête-à-tête with his intended? 'Pon my life, her remaining here shows a great want of propriety,—and 'pon my life, I don't like it!

*Mrs. S.* She doesn't mean anything, Wyndham—don't be cross, there's a good boy. I'll take her away, there!

*Wynd.* Well, now do! A fella', you know, don't like to have a third party present, on such interesting occasions. [*crosses to L.*

*Mrs. S.* [*To Widow.*] Come, dear, let us leave the young people together.

*Widow.* Oh! to be sure! If the children want to be alone, I wouldn't intrude for the world! So, Master Wyndham—

*Wynd.* Do you address yourself to me, Madam?

*Widow.* I really beg ten thousand pardons! Mister Wyndham, au revoir! Well, I always say what I mean, and if these children are thinking of getting married, I don't know which to blame most, their impertinent presumption or the negligence of their respective parents, in not whipping them soundly, and sending them supperless to bed!

[*Exit, Mrs. S. and WIDOW, C.—MATILDA sits, R. H.*

*Wynd.* What the doose is that antediluvian remnant of forgotten ages grumbling about! [*Leans over MATILDA'S chair.*] Aw! Glorious weather!

[*A pause between each speech.*

*Matil.* Sweet!



Wynd. Nice coat this, ain't it?

Matil. Delicious!

Wynd. So we're going to be married, Tilda!

Matil. So Ma says.

Wynd. Ain't it funny? Ha! ha!

[*laughing.*]

Matil. Ha! ha! Ain't it? Ha! ha!

Wynd. What are you laughing at, Tilda?

Matil. I don't know! Ha! ha!

[*rising.*]

Wynd. Nor I! Ha! ha! Don't you think it's a capital idea! Nobody can snub a fella' when he's married, you know, and as for you, let anybody say a cross word, and I'll exterminate them! Where shall we live? Somewhere in the country, I think,—sunny spot, you know—flowers, and all that sort of poetical thing!

Matil. No, indeed, I hate the country!

Wynd. Tilda, dear, you know you mustn't hate any thing but me, after we're married!

Matil. I shall hate you before, if you talk about that stupid country! Who could live there? No balls, no opera! Oh, don't bother! I'm cross!

Wynd. Come, come, this won't do, Tilda! You'll have to obey a fella' when you're his wife, you know!

Matil. Indeed I don't know anything of the kind! My Ma's a wife, and I'm sure she don't obey Pa, a bit!

Wynd. But she ought to, I think!

Matil. But she don't, I know—and I won't, I'm sure!

Wynd. You're a little fool, Tilda!

Matil. And you're a great brute, Wyndham!

Wynd. If it were a man who said that, I should know how to chastise him—as it is, I can only say—you shall never see me again—there!

Matil. I don't care a bit—not a bit—there!

[*They make faces at, and laugh at each other.*]

Wynd. [*Takes up battledore.*] Do you love this kind of fun, Til?

Matil. Umph!

Wynd. Let's have a game!

Matil. Oh, yes, let's!

[*They play away like bricks.*]

*Enter* DRAKE and SHADOW, c., *seeing them.*

Drake. Bravo! Bravo! Triumph of nature over art! [*They hang back abashed.*] Just called in with Shadow, didn't forget you as I came along, children!

Wynd. and Matil. Children, indeed! What next?

Drake. Wynny, I've bought you such a famous lot of candy!

[*Offering candy, which WYNDHAM knocks away with cane.*]

Shadow. Look here, Tildy—here's a beauty! One of the very sweetest crying babies ever imported!

Matil. Oh! what a duck!

Wynd. [*To Drake.*] Sir!—Mister, what's-your-name—this is a piece of insolence a fella' can't overlook! Here's my card! [*giving card.*]

Drake. What am I to do with it?

*Wynd.* If you don't know the etiquette, sir, amongst men of honor, permit me to illuminate your opacity! Be so good as to give me yours in return!

*Drake.* Certainly, my dear boy!

*Wynd.* [*Reading DRAKE'S card.*] "Drake, Dental Operator, Pall Mall. Cavities filled." Pshaw! This is a business card!

*Drake.* Yes—anything the matter with your teeth?

*Wynd.* Pooh! No, sir! You must fight me!

*Drake.* What? Fight!

*Wynd.* A duel!

*Shadow.* I'll be your second!

*Matil.* A duel! Capital! Wynny, do shoot him, there's a dear!

*Drake.* A duel! Ha! ha!

*Wynd.* This absurd levity is unbearable! Sir, you shall hear from me! Do you understand? Hear from me! [*Exit, pompously, c.*]

*Drake.* [*To MATILDA.*] Has he been drinking!

*Matil.* Be good enough to speak with more respect! Excuse me, if I say, that I can no longer be on terms of intimacy with a person who knows so little how to conduct himself towards a gentleman, and a man of honor! Take your baby!

[*Exit pompously, c., throwing down crying baby.*]

*Drake.* By the dignity of Dentistry, we're rather in the minority with these precocities! Grey hairs are dreadfully at a discount here! Ah! well, the unfortunate little wretches are going to plunge into premature wedlock! I'll resign my revenge into the hands of inevitable fate!

*Shadow.* It's really too bad! I intended to have married Tilda myself!

*Drake.* And why didn't you?

*Shadow.* Whenever I came here, I always forgot to mention the thing to her!

*Enter WIDOW and MRS. SMILER, c.*

*Drake.* There you are, incomprehensible enigma! Pray, tell me why—

*Widow.* Hold your tongue, if you can, thou sociable raven! Mr. Greenleaf, our friend's rich uncle, has arrived with his young wife.

*Drake.* Apropos, I heard—

*Shadow.* Yes, and so did I!

*Widow.* Hush!

*Drake.* Such a capital anecdote about that stupid old—

*Enter GREENLEAF, MR. SMILER, and MRS. GREENLEAF, c.*

*Green.* Thank you, thank you! Ah! Widow, your humble! Here we are, you see, the old man and his darling, dropped down in the midst of your terrible city!

*Drake.* You may say terrible city! I really beg pardon!

*Mrs. S.* Mr. Greenleaf, this is our friend, Mr. Drake.

*Green.* Sir, your most!—

*Mrs. S.* Mr. Shadow, Mr. Greenleaf.

*Green.* How are you, sir?

*Drake.* How do you like London, Mr. Greenleaf?

*Green.* Good gracious, sir! I haven't been in it more than ten minutes!

*Drake.* Oh! to be sure! You'll excuse the remark!

*Shadow.* Will you permit me to inquire,—that is to say—what—I mean when—bless my soul! I declare I quite forget what I was going to say!

*Green.* Don't trouble yourself to recollect it, sir, on my account! Ladies and gentlemen, this is my darling little wife! I don't know much about your city ceremonies, but there she is, bless her innocent heart!

*Rose.* Adam!—

*Green.* Ah, well! I suppose it's not the modish thing to say a good word for one's wife!

*Drake.* Decidedly unfashionable!

*Widow.* But naturally honest, and I like it!

*Drake.* Of course, all women do!

*Green.* I'm a man of very few words, mortally hate compliments, flattery, and all that kind of restraint upon our natural impulses, and you could just as easily bind me down to the formalities of society, as you could confine an oak in a cucumber frame! I'm glad to see you, nephew, niece, all, so is Rose! We've come to stay with you two or three weeks, perhaps a month.

*Mr. and Mrs. S.* Oh, longer, dear uncle, longer!

*Green.* That depends upon how you behave yourselves.

*Drake.* [*aside to SMILER.*] You'll never squeeze anything out of that dry chip.

*Mrs. S.* I don't understand you, sir!

*Shadow.* [*To Mrs. S.*] She's a lovely creature, ain't she? As the immortal Thingumbob says; ah—there! Beautiful idea gone again!

*Mrs. S.* She's pretty well.

*Drake.* [*To WIDOW.*] There's some great family coup d'etat in view.

*Widow.* Did you ever think well of anybody?

*Drake.* Never, but one.

*Widow.* Who may that be?

*Drake.* The humble individual who has the honor to address you.

*Widow.* Pshaw!

*Green.* Come, good folks, show us our apartment, and let's make ourselves at home.

*Mrs. S.* To be sure, uncle! Allow me! [*rings bell.*]

*Green.* Do you think I have no strength in my arms? I can help myself, thank you, all the same. Now, Rosy!

*Mrs. S.* [*To ROSE.*] Won't you let me assist you?

*Rose.* You are very good! Thank you; it's no matter!

*Green.* Don't fuss about my gentle rosebud, now. She's not much used to strangers. But, bless you! we'll all be as merry as harvesters, when we get a little acquainted!



*Enter* JAMES, C.

*Mrs. S.* Now, James, send Susan up, directly, to wait on dear Mrs. Greenleaf. Ah! here she is!

*Enter* SUSAN, C.

*Mr. S.* James, wait on my uncle.

*Mrs. S.* Susan, attend to the young lady.

*Green.* Come, widow, you're one of the women I like. I want to talk to you a little.

[*All exeunt*, R. 1 E., *except* DRAKE and SHADOW—*no one noticing them.*]

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT II.

### ACT III.

SCENE.—*Interior.* MRS. SMILER and ROSE, *discovered.*

*Mrs. S.* You have no idea how delighted I am, dear, that it has been in our poor power to make your time pass happily.

*Rose.* You are kindness itself, my dear Mrs. Smiler. I have not a wish ungratified in existence.

*Mrs. S.* Long may it continue so, darling, although in this changeable and wicked world, such a destiny is enjoyed by few.

*Rose.* You speak as though you had cause for unhappiness! I trust it is not so?

*Mrs. S.* Why, no, my child, experience has made me expect and prepare for clouds upon life's sunshine; but you, so young, so unused to misfortune!

*Rose.* You alarm me! Do you know of any reason that I should be apprehensive?

*Mrs. S.* Ah! my dear child, you cannot be aware, never having had a shade across your bright path, of the dark hours that must o'ershadow even the most fortunate lot!

*Rose.* Tell me, I implore you, for I am, indeed, inexperienced, and have not looked, as yet, beyond the surface! Do you speak thus to warn me of approaching calamity? Have I any coming event to dread?

*Mrs. S.* No individual one, my dear, that I know of; I simply take a mother's privilege to counsel you, so that if any misfortune should assail you, you would be enabled to nerve yourself with fortitude to bear it! See what a sensitive creature you are! If I thought my foolish words would have had such an effect upon your gay heart, they would never have been spoken. Come, come, love! there *may* nothing occur to mar your life's happiness! Are you not married to an excellent man?—a good, a wealthy man; not that riches always brings content, but your husband is all you can desire.

*Rose.* Indeed! indeed! he is the soul of loving kindness!



*Mrs. S.* To me, he appears as *fatherly*—I shouldn't have said that—you know what I mean, dear. After all, he isn't so very old, and who would not prefer one, whose mind is matured and steady, to the flighty boys, who buzz about one like so many beautiful butterflies.

*Rose.* He is my husband—my young heart's choice!

*Mrs. S.* The first?

*Rose.* [*hesitates.*] Yes—the first—that judgment sanctioned.

*Mrs. S.* Then there was another, that the judgment vetoed, eh? Come, confide in me, there's a darling! I might be enabled to give confidence for confidence. I may have a secret as well as you.

*Rose.* It is no secret—at least, it should be none! In my early girlhood, there was one, who—(such memories are painful: although the chain be broken, the heart must bear the sundered links!)—Yes, there was one, I thought I loved,—I did then love, with the ardor of a girl's first passion, until I found that he was all unworthy!

*Mrs. S.* Then you have had a sorrow, my poor child?

*Rose.* No, a regret, but not a sorrow!—regret that changed to joy at my escape from never-ending sorrow, as step by step, he whom I once deemed perfection, trod the downward road to utter degradation!

*Mrs. S.* Does your husband know of this?

*Rose.* Alas! he does not! Day by day, I have resolved to tell him, but at first, I feared to interpose the slightest shadow upon our mutual happiness, until I suddenly awoke to the dreadful conviction that my apprehension was weakness, and delay worse than crime! Since which, each succeeding hour increases equally my criminal neglect, and great unwillingness to wound so good and true a heart!

*Mrs. S.* It would, as you wisely say, only make him uncomfortable. Old men, you know, are apt to be jealous! Pardon me for saying "old," it escaped me!

*Rose.* It is I who am to blame for not having spoken of it before!

*Mrs. S.* Nonsense! I'll warrant me, he has got secrets enough of his own! Don't look so astonished, my dear! Do you suppose a man has lived all his years, (excuse me!) without little secrets? Therefore, you see the account is tolerably equal, most likely a large balance, my dear, in your favor! I declare, here he comes. Take my advice, wait till he begins to divulge, then you may make a clean breast of it! If she tells him now, I'm no diplomatist! [*aside.*]

[*Exit Mrs. SMILER, c.*]

*Rose.* She must have meant this kindly, to forewarn my inexperience, but what a change a few short moments have produced!—a terror, undefined and shapeless, pervades my senses! More dreadful in its vague incertitude, than the dark outline of some known calamity: My soul, shut up in its content, never wandered beyond the bounds of present happiness, but now, the barrier is gone! I doubt, nay, more, suspect! "*He may have a secret!*" Does she know he has? Oh! that I had remained in my contented ignorance, for this is torture!

*Enter GREENLEAF and SMILER, R. H. 2 E.*

*Green.* Ah! my heart's sunshine! what's the matter, Rose?

*Rose.* Nothing—that is, I don't feel very well! I am unjust, I know I am, dear husband, friend! I will explain all to you when we are alone!

*Green.* Now, now, dear Rose! come, tell me, what has happened to annoy you?

*Rose.* A foolish, a most foolish thought, which now is gone for ever! Dear husband, bear with my pettishness, I know you will, for you are all goodness! I'll come again soon! [*Exit, R. 2 E.*]

*Green.* Bless her sweet, innocent, confiding soul!

*Smiler.* Indeed, you ought to be happy!

*Green.* Ha! ha! happy, nephew! of course I'm happy! Never intend to be anything else but happy! There's nothing of the crying philosopher about me! Why should we not enjoy the bright, beautiful world that lies spread before us, like a perpetual banquet of delight! Does not everything in universal nature set us the example? It is man alone, the grumbler, who will continue fashioning his own pet discontents!

*Smiler.* It is indeed fortunate that you possess such a temperament!

*Green.* Come with me into the country, nephew, the blessed, placid, simple, cheerful country, away from the moral and physical mud that clogs your city ways, and you'll possess it also! ha, ha!

*Smiler.* I don't think, uncle, that anything in existence could check that merry laugh of your's!

*Green.* Why should it, my boy! I confess I can't laugh quite so loud, or so long here; can't let out my lungs to their full extent, for fear the sound should startle your city propriety! But you should hear Rosey and me, at home, out in the green fields, where one is certain of an honest echo, where the honest trees bow without sycophancy, and the honest birds warble forth the true sentiments of their merry little hearts! That's the place to laugh, my boy! where everything laughs with you! Ha! ha! why, what the deuce is the matter with you?

*Smiler.* Nothing, dear uncle, nothing! long may you continue to enjoy such a pleasant existence.

*Green.* "Long may I continue!"—why you imperturbable, smileless, soulless incarnation of day-book and ledger! I won't have you carry that Gorgon face about in my presence! If you don't laugh, you villain, I'll anatomize you! Laugh, you half animated block of city pavement!

*Smiler.* It is impossible to do otherwise when you are near, uncle. Ha! ha!

*Green.* Dear me! That's a very foggy attempt! Never mind—don't you feel better? Of course you do! Talk of doctors—pooh!

*Enter GRIMM, mysteriously, c.*

*Smiler.* What's the matter now!

*Grimm.* Enough! haven't you heard?

*Smiler.* What?

*Grimm.* "Discount and Bustemup" are gone!

*Smiler.* The devil!

*Green.* Hallo! here's another city countenance! Who's this anatomy of melancholy, nephew?

*Smiler.* Oh! you don't know what an agreeable fellow he is, in spite of his solemn looks! It's Mr. Solomon Grimm, my partner, uncle! Smile, or I'm ruined! [*aside to GRIMM.*

*Grimm.* Smile? Certainly—with pleasure! [*grins.*

*Green.* Ha! ha! Agreeable? He looks it!

*Smiler.* [*aside to GRIMM.*] Say something lively! Would you destroy me?

*Grimm.* [*to SMILER.*] Lively! Oh, yes, to be sure! You know it's all over, I suppose?

*Smiler.* Never mind that now! [*aloud.*] Very good! Capital! a good joke! [*to GRIMM.*] Why the devil don't you laugh?

*Grimm.* I can't do it any better! I never had any practice!

*Smiler.* If my uncle should suspect the straitness of our circumstances, we are lost! Do be funny, for heaven's sake!

*Green.* Any news stirring in your great city, to-day, Mr. Grimm?

*Smiler.* Don't you hear! Any news?

*Grimm.* Ah! oh! yes—Discount and Bustemup—dear me, I forgot! [*aside.*] Ha! ha! Capital joke! You don't see it, I suppose—can't say I do exactly—but it's a fact, nevertheless—stock debtor to—Ha! ha! Do you perceive? [*to SMILER.*] Will that do? What is to become of us!

*Smiler.* Don't be alarmed—I'll manage it all! Ha! ha! Very good, indeed!

*Grimm.* [*to SMILER.*] May I go now?

*Smiler.* Not for the world! Ha! very good! I must really tell my uncle that!

*Green.* What is it, boy? If there's anything in the world I do like, it's a good, hearty, ringing laugh!

*Smiler.* Ha! ha! Mr. Grimm, has just been telling me—but let him tell it himself. I should only spoil it! So, Grimm!—

*Grimm.* What is it? I don't know what it is!

*Smiler.* There, go along, and say something!

*Grimm.* Well, sir—oh, lord!—you must know that—

*Green.* Yes! yes!

*Grimm.* That—that—[*DRAKE heard without.*] Thank heaven for this relief! Drake will tell stories enough for a regiment! [*aside.*

*Drake.* [*outside.*] I must see him! I have something of the greatest importance to communicate!

*Enter DRAKE, C.*

My dear boy! Bless my soul, who would have thought it! I have made such a discovery!—[*starts.*] You here, Mr. Greenleaf, and laughing, as I live!

*Green.* Ha! ha! yes, sir! Is there anything so very remarkable about that?



*Drake.* No, of course not—at least I should think so, to be sure.

*Green.* Go on with your conversation, sir—never heed me—I won't interrupt you! [DRAKE *pantomimes* to SMILER.

*Smiler.* What the deuce are you twisting yourself into a living telegraph about?

*Drake.* Hush! nothing! Good gracious, what a question. Bless my soul! I think it will rain shortly.

*Green.* Ha, ha! I shouldn't be at all surprised.

*Drake.* That's right, laugh away; I beg pardon! Miserable man!

*Smiler.* What do you mean?

*Drake.* Not a word!

*Green.* What's the newest scandal, Mr. Drake? I'm told that you are its very index—a most flattering distinction, I must say.

*Drake.* Perhaps I am.

*Green.* Then, sir, you'll excuse the frankness of the remark, when I say, that like an index, you might be torn out of the book of social life, without materially injuring the volume.

*Drake.* Witty, decidedly—rational—very! How I could retort—but I won't; no, I will not.

*Smiler.* You are evidently suffering the tortures of some pent-up secret, Drake! Out with it: relieve your laboring mind.

*Green.* Aye, aye! What fresh victim has the jackall hunted down for the vile repast?

*Drake.* I've positively a great mind to tell, it's so decidedly amusing. Only fancy what I've just heard, from undoubted authority.

*Green.* Certainly, undoubted! The veracity of your scandal-monger is never questioned by the greedy listener. You'll excuse the freedom of the remark, doctor. Scandal is one of the few things I can't laugh at.

*Drake.* Bless your soul, I don't mean anything! I only run round and gather items for the mere fun of it! It's so awfully difficult to raise a laugh out of anything now-a-days; besides, it's only tit for tat! everybody does it! At the last place I visited, I heard a few on dits about your private character; when I leave here, as a matter of course, you'll riddle mine. But what does that signify? We call each other dear friend, as usual; the surface of the visiting world is smooth and unruffled, and who cares about the currents that agitate its concealed depths.

*Green.* Wrong, wrong—all wrong!

*Smiler.* There's something on your mind now, let's have it. Uncle, you don't object.

*Green.* Oh, no, bless you! Go on, pursue your estimable vocation, sir.

*Drake.* Upon my life I've a great mind—I will. You must know, then, that a certain gentleman of our acquaintance, pretty well stricken in years—that is to say, on the shady side of fifty—very foolishly fell in love with, and hastily married, a little, lively country girl, young enough to be his daughter.

*Green.* Ha! ha! Very amusing, indeed, but not at all unusual, I believe.



*Smiler.* Not at all. Ha! very good—laugh, Grimm!

*Drake.* Now, don't interrupt me! Well, not long after the marriage, our friend brought his baby-wife to the city, where there happened to live, at the time, a former lover of the young lady, who, out of revenge for some slight, determined to destroy the domestic happiness of the aforesaid worthy but ill-assorted couple, by means of some injudiciously warm letters, written by the young lady, in the intoxication of a first passion!

*Green.* Very inconsiderate of the young lady, eh, nephew? Ha! ha!

*Smiler.* Decidedly! Ha! ha!—laugh, Grimm!

*Drake.* I believe that's all that has transpired for the present—the denouement is still to come. But what a chance for rich developments, spicy paragraphs, and all the highly-seasoned condiments wherewith the mental palate of that sensual epicure, the public, is now especially tickled! Funny, ain't it?

*Enter SHADOW, c.*

*Shadow.* Ah! my dear Smiler, I've got such news for you! Have you heard? Drake here! Oh, then I'm too late! Mr. Greenleaf smiling away the same as ever.

*Green.* To be sure, sir. Have you any objection?

*Shadow.* Not the least in the world, if you prefer it. I only know that I don't think I should indulge in quite so much good humor.

*Green.* Indeed! And, sir, have you the superb impudence to suppose that any contingency in nature could induce me to take *you* for an example!

*Drake.* Egad! that's good! Ha! ha!

*Smiler.* Capital! Ha! ha!—laugh, Grimm!

*Grimm.* Can't, any more—stock's exhausted!

*Shadow.* Can't say I see the point of the joke!

*Green.* Ha! ha! Never expected you could! Well, I'll leave you to enjoy yourselves in your own way, which I must confess is not at all in mine. I must go, and see after my darling Rosey! Nephew, your funny friend's mirth is frightful! Do look at his face! What's the matter, friend; can't you raise a smile in any way?

*Grimm.* Can't, really—overdrawn my account—check refused!

*Green.* Listen to me, sir, and I'll tell you how to accumulate a large amount of real enjoyment! Admit benevolence and humanity into partnership, and kick unworthy selfishness out of the concern. Don't let the business of your life be contracted to the narrow limits of a counting-house, but open an account current with the wide universe beyond. There is no man living but can do some good, however limited the circle in which he may revolve, and every worthy but heavily laden heart lightened of its burthen, will yield so many sums of joy to be hoarded here, where all demands are payable at sight—my friend, at sight! That's my system of doing business with the world! Ha! ha! ha! ha! And you see how it pays! Ha! ha!

[*Exit GREENLEAF, R. H. I E.*

*Grimm.* Lord bless me! I'm glad he's gone! Now I can be off, I suppose?

*Smiler.* Yes—but mum! Not a word! [Exit GRIMM, C. D.]

*Shadow.* What a laughing hyena it is! Don't he know the—a—thingamy—

*Drake.* Hold your tongue! You'll spoil every thing!

*Shadow.* I insist upon telling Smiler!

*Drake.* Very well—go on!

*Shadow.* You must know then, that—you'll laugh like the deuce when you hear it! Drake here—no—was it you—yes, it was! Drake and I were at what's-his-name's,—there came in such a fellow, and—confound it!—it's very provoking! What was I talking about! Drake, you tell it!

*Drake.* [crosses to c.] I knew how it would be! Well, then, to come to the point at once—do you know to whom I alluded in my story, just now—old man—young wife, &c.?

*Smiler.* No—haven't an idea! Why, it can't be—

*Drake.* Yes, but it is, though! Your veritable, venerable, individual, laughing philosopher of an uncle! Ain't it rich?

*Smiler.* Glorious! [aside.] I really can't see the joke! You forget he is my relative! It may not be true, sir?

*Shadow.* Oh! yes it is!

*Drake.* True! Of course it is! Didn't we see the fellow ourselves! A picturesque, bravo-like savage, by the name of Wolfe! Hadn't I the very letters in my hands! Apropos, to make all safe, and to prevent any possibility of a mistake, I kept one back just for the fun of the thing! [shows letter.] Now ain't it true? Now ain't it rich?

*Smiler.* Let me see! [takes letter.] Pshaw! that's not her handwriting! You have been imposed upon!

[Throwing it carelessly on table.]

*Drake.* Oh! don't say that! You'll spoil the best joke of the season!

*Shadow.* It would be a positive wrong done to the community!

*Smiler.* I'm very sorry to be obliged to demolish this romance, but so it is!

*Drake.* No matter, Shadow! We can tell the story, any how! If it's not true, it's no fault of ours! We didn't invent it, so we're safe! Come along! I say, Smiler, you look grave! Anything the matter?

*Smiler.* I have a great many things to think of—do leave me to myself—there's a good fellow!

*Drake.* To be sure! Wouldn't intrude for the world! Come along, Shadow!

[Exeunt DRAKE and SHADOW, C.]

*Smiler.* Thank heaven! they are gone! Now for this precious letter!

*Re-enter DRAKE and SHADOW.*

*Drake.* Excuse me!—come back for my letter. Where is it?—what have you done with it?

*Smiler.* See, sir, how I treat all such malevolent aspersions! [tears another letter.] Good morning!

*Drake.* Oh! good morning! [*going—returns.*] You're not angry with me, are you? [*going.*]

*Shadow.* [*returns.*] Or me? [*going.*]

*Drake.* [*returns.*] It's no fault of *our's*, you know! [*going.*]

*Shadow.* [*returns.*] We couldn't help it!

*Smiler.* You don't know the mass of business on my hands! Now do be off! [*pushes them off.*] Lock that door, John. [*reads letter.*] "Dearest Rupert!"—Um!—"heart's first choice"—the very thing! all flowers and flagree work—roses, romance, and rhodomontade! Oh! thou *priceless* treasure! so light, so flimsy, and insignificant, yet soon in the balance of circumstance destined to outweigh the happiness of two hearts! My *first* step must be to find this *Wolfe*, and then—*then*—why, let Fortune hold the dice-box! [*Exit, c.*]

*Enter* WIDOW JOYBELL and ROSE, R. H.

*Widow.* Sit down, Rose, I want to talk to you. You're not happy—these people are worrying you about something—I know they are! Don't look as though you thought me dreadfully impertinent!

*Rose.* I have no reason to be otherwise than happy, I assure you.

*Widow.* Yes, you have! Don't be alarmed, dear! I am not aware of the particular reason—wouldn't force a confidence for the world! I may be plain-spoken, but I have a heart. That you are unhappy, I can see as plainly as though it were written on your face. Now, some people love to nurse a pet sorrow—it is so interesting to mope about the house, and imagine yourself a victim! A touch of real calamity is the only cure for that whimsical complaint! Is that your case, my dear?

*Rose.* No, no! indeed it is not!

*Widow.* Then forgive me, Rose, for alluding to it at all. Let us speak of something else. When are the young people expected home?

*Rose.* Mrs. Smiler is busy, I believe, preparing their apartments.

*Widow.* Yes, I saw them! very sweet, and baby-houseey! How this Boy-and-Girl style of matrimony is carried on, is a mystery to me!

*Enter* DRAKE, C.

*Drake.* Ah! widow, excuse me! Alone, eh? Where's Smiler? I want to see him immediately. Such news! Heard the particulars?

*Widow.* No, sir, nor have I any curiosity.

*Drake.* Ah! Mrs. Greenleaf, there you are, I declare, looking positively—Here's an opportunity! nothing like going to the fountain-head for intelligence! Now I shall find it all out! [*aside.*] Mrs. G., how lovely you look! By the bye, I heard a little anecdote about you to-day! Can't be true, of course, and therefore there's no harm in repeating it! Did you ever know a young gentleman of the name of Wolfe?

*Rose.* [*faintly.*] Yes, sir! Why do you enquire?

*Drake.* Simply because he's been enquiring for you, that's all! Such a looking scapegrace! do you know the fellow says, you were



in love with him once! Ha! ha! and can prove it! Funny, ain't it?

*Widow.* You insensible blockhead! Do you not see that you are wounding the poor girl to the heart by repeating such absurd tales! It is by such ready messengers as you, that slander is made mischievous!

*Drake.* Bless my soul and body! good gracious! dear me! I wouldn't hurt anybody's feelings for the world!

*Widow.* [*crosses to ROSE.*] But one word, Rose, and forgive me for saying it! Have you cause to fear these slanders?

*Rose.* No! By my soul's hope, no!

*Widow.* Then look them in the face, girl, with the unquailing fearlessness of truth!

*Drake.* Dear me! Is there anywhere I can go? anything that I can do?

*Widow.* Yes! shut your mischievous mouth, and keep it so!

*Drake.* I'm sure if I thought these letters were of so much consequence—

*Rose.* What letters?

*Drake.* Why, your letters to him, when—a long time ago you know!—

*Rose.* I'm lost! lost!

[*aside.*]

*Drake.* Here's one of them, oh! I forgot! I gave it to Smiler!

*Widow.* To Smiler! and he retained it?

*Drake.* No, tore it up!

*Widow.* Are you sure? So, so! there's a plot evidently! This wide-mouthed, male gossip, is only a tool! Here's work for me! [*aside.*] Rose, does your husband know of this?

*Rose.* Alas! that is my crime, he does not!

*Widow.* Almost a crime! However, it is no time now to reprehend, rather to retrieve! He must be told of it at once, and by you!

*Rose.* It is too late! He will know it was forced from me by circumstance! Ah! the fatal result of that one concealment! But I shall humble myself before him at once.

[*Crosses to c. Enter Servant, with card, which he presents to ROSE— She sees name on it, and sinks into chair, dropping card, which DRAKE picks up.*]

*Drake.* Wolfe! How remarkably funny!

*Widow.* What?

*Drake.* I mean curious!

*Widow.* Eh!

*Drake.* No, awful! that's it, awful! Only to think!

*Rose.* [*with an effort.*] Let the gentleman be shown here, I shall see him!

[*Exit JAMES, c.*]

*Widow.* Right, my child, right!

*Drake.* Perfectly right!

*Rose.* And alone.

*Drake.* Quite proper!

*Widow.* Quite! Remember, my dear Rose, that crime only is the coward! Come along, sir.

[*to DRAKE.*]



*Drake.* Oh, never mind me! I'm nobody! I'll skim over this paper, in a corner!

*Widow.* Come, Doctor!

*Drake.* A peep! only a peep, my delectable widow!

[*Exit WIDOW and DRAKE, L. 2 E.*

*Rose.* A vague dread that this terrible day would come, has always risen, like a spectre, before my thought! At last it has arrived, and the life blood is yet warm about my heart! I thought it would have killed me! Ha! It is his footstep—that memory clings yet!

[*Enter WOLFE, c. They look at each other, an instant, without speaking—she tremblingly curtsseys, he bows with exaggerated politeness.*

*Wolfe.* [down L.] Well, Rose, here I am once more! the cream of constancy, the very incarnation of fidelity! The vase may be a little dilapidated, but the scent of the roses still hangs round it, as the poet says! Rather unexpected this visit, I suppose, but we must endeavor to make it as agreeable as possible! Why, Rose, how is this? have you no warmer welcome to bestow upon your poor knight-errant, after so long, so very long an absence?

*Rose.* Sir—Mr. Wolfe—I am now called Mrs. Greenleaf.

*Wolfe.* Hum!—Indeed!—And I was once called Rupert, with occasionally a yet more familiar prefix; but I forget myself, and really beg a thousand pardons! Madam, allow me to congratulate you upon your brilliant and suitable alliance! It must, indeed, be beneficial to an inexperienced, thoughtless girl, when her husband combines the prudent discretion of age, with the spirit and freshness of youth! But what am I speaking about! The elegance of your surroundings, the enviable height of your social position, sufficiently prove that you, yourself, don't lack discretion, and as for disparity of years, what does that weigh against ease and comfort; and as for love, why, that is only matter for some rhymester's brain! Is it not so, Rose? I crave a million pardons, Mrs. Greenleaf!

*Rose.* I must endure your insolence, sir—I have brought it on myself!—but pray, come to the mischievous intent of this interview, for the boldness of your tone declares you have a purpose here!

*Wolfe.* Nay, nay! don't cruelly abridge the brief happy moments that your society affords me. You don't know how few the rays of sunlight that have gleamed across my path, or you would not drive me back so soon into the world of shadows! Rose, wont you shake hands with me? With one whom you loved once—with one who will love you ever! Aye, Rose, love you even as the fallen spirits must have loved, although they cursed the Paradise from whence their own misdeeds had banished them! Wont you give me your hand? Well, perhaps it's better! There was a time, however, when your delicate nerves would not have shrunk from the contact! There was a time when those now averted eyes flashed forth in tenderness and joy, when they encountered mine, and drooped in sadness only at the parting! There was a time that heart, so changed and cold, so calculating and so worldly-prudent, bounded with perfect and un-

selfish love, when pressed to mine! Aye! I know those recollections are unpleasant, but am I the only one to whom remembrance must be agony? The brightness of your present lot may have quenched such souvenirs—but amidst the darkness of my fate, they blaze like lightning flashes, only to destroy!

*Rose.* What am I to expect? Let me know the worst!

*Wolfe.* Revenge! Next to reciprocated love, which you capriciously denied me, upon the flimsy plea of my too free a life, the sweetest, most heart-satisfying passion, is revenge!

*Rose.* Would you destroy me!

*Wolfe.* You have destroyed me, have you not? then why should I spare you!

*Rose.* For the sake of humanity—for your own hereafter peace!

*Wolfe.* Ha! ha! What care you about my hereafter? Egad! you have a pleasant lodging here! it's long since I have breathed amidst such luxury. Ah! I see you are getting impatient, so now to come to business at once, for my necessities have made me very mercantile. Think how I'm changed, Rose, when I can barter even my revenge for gold!

*Rose.* What mean you?

*Wolfe.* I have a secret—a dangerous one, and fain would sell it! I come to the best market with my wares, you see—for it affects your honor!

*Rose.* Sir!

*Wolfe.* Apparently! be calm, and let us make our bargain with deliberation! See what a walking-ledger I have become! Something of a difference, Rose, since we used to meet at the little garden walk——

*Rose.* Silence, sir! You are beneath my husband's roof!

*Wolfe.* For which, I trust, your husband's roof will allow me most humbly to apologize! I really wouldn't fret so much, and take the thing to heart! I don't want to see you ruined, unless you insist upon it! There's somewhat of the old feeling sticks about me here—strange, is it not? but what I do particularly want is money! Come, what will you give?

*Rose.* Man! man! You'll drive me mad! Heaven help me!  
What am I to do? [crosses to L.]

*Wolfe.* It's very easy to get rid of me! Your indulgent lord and master, the venerable Greenleaf, has too much money—I have too little! We must endeavor to atone for the injustice of Dame Fortune, and equalize matters somewhat—you understand? Come, Rose, be reasonable!

*Rose.* Changed! changed, indeed! Begone, you terrify me! [crosses to R.] I did not think humanity capable of such baseness!

*Wolfe.* Very well, I'm off! But let me advise you to look at the merchandize before I go! Here is a superior packet of daintily flavored epistles—going to the highest bidder! Look at them! Do you recognize the hand-writing—neat little crowquill—quite a pity if they should fall into wrong hands. Shall I read you a few choice extracts? “My own beloved Rupert!” It can't be, surely! Yes,

Here it is again, and again! "It seems an age since we met." Oh! believe me, this is no common nosegay, but a whole garden full of flowery epithets! Dear me! how sundry high-toned, moral journalists that I could name, would squabble for the right to give these interesting chapters to the public! Thanks to its peculiar appetite for such high-seasoned food, I need not travel far to find a market—nor need you blush to see yourself in print—a brief day, and you'll be famous!

*Rose.* Rupert Wolfe, by the memory of that old time you spoke of, I implore you not to destroy me, soul and body! Restore me those fatal letters, and I shall kneel in gratitude to you, and ever more pray for your future welfare! You surely cannot be so fiend-like as to rejoice in my agony! In the deepest humility I sue to you for mercy! mercy! [kneels.

*Wolfe.* This moment is worth an eternity of torture!

*Enter at back, SMILER, DRAKE and SHADOW.—ROSE screams and falls into SMILER'S arms.—Tableau.*

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—WYNDHAM'S apartment—WYNDHAM and MATILDA seated back to back.

*Matil.* I'm sure, if I thought being married was only to be aggravated, and tormented, and annoyed, as you do me, I wouldn't have been in such a hurry, I promise you.

*Wynd.* And if I had the slightest idea that it would have been so atrociously slow, I should have remained a bachelor until I was twenty.

*Matil.* I'm miserable—I know I am.

*Wynd.* What! you're not quite certain?

*Matil.* Oh! don't worry me.

*Wynd.* Of what can you possibly complain, Mrs. Wyndham?

*Matil.* Oh! plenty. In the first place you never take me out for a walk, as you used to do.

*Wynd.* Good gracious! what a primitive idea! Man and wife walk out together! Why the notion is positively antediluvian! For my part, I can't see what you want, I'm sure; if you like, you can pass your time in the most agreeable manner.

*Matil.* Indeed! I should like to know how?

*Wynd.* In the first place, you can order your carriage, and pay flying visits, for the purpose of circulating the pleasant little stories which are always current amongst your female acquaintance. Then, have you not the inexhaustible delight of tiring out shopkeepers and other amusing creatures, by tumbling over merchandize that you haven't the slightest idea of purchasing?

*Matil.* Pshaw! I have done that so often, there's no fun in it.



*Wynd* That's your own fault, Tildy. If you have wastefully expended your small stock of enjoyment, I can't help it.

*Matil.* I'm so dreadfully angry with you, I only wish I had somebody to flirt with, only to make you miserable.

*Enter SHADOW, L. 1 E.*

*Shadow.* Aha! fortune favors the—ah—brave, I think, was the poet's observation. I couldn't have arrived at a more auspicious moment. Flirt with me—I'm rather partial to it.

*Wynd.* Yes, Tildy, take a lesson from him—he's a professor of the art.

*Matil.* And won't you be jealous?

*Wynd.* Jealous! what's that, Shadow?

*Shadow.* 'Pon my life, I don't exactly know! I believe it's the great staple of all Spanish tales and Italian romances. It's a sort of melancholy, green-eyed monster, as the poet says, pining patiently on some kind of a monument: it's something sweeter than a serpent's tooth, I think the remark is, or an ungrateful child, I don't exactly remember.

*Wynd.* Well, au revoir, good people! Tildy, bye, bye! I dare say I shall be home to dinner, that is to say, unless there's something very tempting at the club.

*Matil.* The club! Now, isn't it too bad, Mr. Shadow?

*[Brings down chair and sits.*

*Shadow.* Unpardonable! Matilda, did it ever occur, seriously, to you, that you are very pretty?

*[sits near her.*

*Matil.* Sir?

*Shadow.* 'Pon my life you are! And that amiable little noodle of a husband of yours, don't deserve you at all.

*Matil.* I wish you would not jest in this unworthy way, sir.

*Shadow.* Bless your simple little soul! I'm in downright earnest; it would be very unworthy to jest on such a subject.

*Matil.* What do you mean, sir?

*Shadow.* Mean? Why what should I mean but a little flirtation, that's all! I'm very much in love with you, 'pon my life I am!

*Matil.* Oh! that's flirtation, is it?

*Shadow.* Decidedly. Society allows it—your excellent little husband advised it!

*Matil.* I am exceedingly pleased, sir, to be instructed. So, then, in the fashionable vocabulary, flirtation means, addressing your friend's wife, during his absence, in language you dare not use before his face.

*Shadow.* Precisely! You have quite a proper idea of the thing. You see, it would look impertinent to do so in his presence, though, indeed, that is no obstacle sometimes.

*Matil.* You never said as much to me before I was married.

*Shadow.* Distinctly not! Then there would have been no knowing what inconsiderate word might have been construed into a declaration; now there's no fear of such a contingency,—and ah! perhaps, I may never have a better opportunity of declaring that I positively adore you to the very threshold of desperation.

*Matil.* Must I listen to such language?

*Shadow.* To be sure! of course! You must learn to expect it now. You are young and inexperienced, and have evidently yet to discover, that the most glorious privileges of a married woman, are her little flirtations. The marriage certificate is her declaration of independence! Of course, nobody is in earnest. When I say I love you, I don't mean it a bit. It's only a matter of form that we must go through!

*Matil.* Oh! then there's no real affection in the case?

*Shadow.* Certainly not! That apocryphal phenomenon is of entirely too absorbant a nature, and limits the sphere of one's happiness most tyrannically.

*Matil.* An exception is to be made in favor of one's husband, I presume?

*Shadow.* Um! Well, that's optional, of course, but I really wouldn't advise it! It is the undoubted duty of every bright and beautiful luminary like yourself, to diffuse as much happiness as you can amongst your fellow beings, and concentrating it all upon one point, would only be to place the social world, of which you are the centre, in one continual, and deplorable eclipse!

*Enter* DRAKE, L. II.

*Drake.* Ha! There you are! Excuse me—wouldn't have intruded for the world had I known! If I'm *de trop*, say so, and I'm off! By-the-bye, my dear, just saw your little rake of a husband going out for an airing with Lord Cheatem, the turfman, and two or three other rather rapid characters. Youth's the season made for joy! Not quite right, though, to leave his charming young wife all alone!

*Matil.* [*aside.*] Provoking! But I must not allow these men to see my mortification! [*weeps.*]

*Drake.* Don't cry, dear—every body does it!

*Matil.* Cry, sir! Do you take me for a child!

*Exit, R.*

*Drake.* Certainly not! Wouldn't for the world! Any news, *Shadow*? anything further about the Greenleaf affair? Hallo! here comes our lively Widow!

*Enter* WIDOW, L. C.

*Widow.* [*aside.*] Matilda not here! What are these ravens about?

*Drake.* Good morning, Widow! Tilda has gone into her own apartment. Just observing, Widow, what a censorious world this is, to be sure! Always busies itself about other folks affairs.

*Widow.* It is quite immaterial to me, sir, what the world busies itself about, therefore you need not take the trouble to repeat it!

*Drake.* Very good! I won't! Apropos, how goes on that affair of Greenleaf's? All private here, you know—won't let it go any further! Separated, I understand? Pity, ain't it! But really he was too old for her! Poor soul! What will become of her?

*Shadow.* What, indeed! It's terrible to think of!

*Drake.* Is it true he tried to cut his throat?

*Shadow.* And being prevented, took poison!

*Drake.* An overdose which was only partially effective?

*Shadow.* Are his razors removed?

*Drake.* And his bedroom windows barricaded? Poor old gentleman! The world must be a blank to him now—he'll never smile again—never! [*GREENLEAF laughs heartily outside.*] Bless my soul! how awful! Didn't know that it had assumed so frightful a form! Insanity! What a paroxysm!

*Shadow.* Straight waistcoats! What a yell!

*Enter GREENLEAF and SMILER—DRAKE and SHADOW avoid GREENLEAF, L'*

*Green.* Why, what in the name of common sense has come to you all? Every one looks as solemn in the house, as though it were canopied in thunder clouds! There's no getting a laugh out of a living soul! Your confounded city long-faces have infected even my merry-hearted Rose! Oh, this will never do! I must away back to my cheerful, joyous country! I haven't had a real, right down earnest, hearty laugh since I left it! Where are the young folks?

*Widow.* [*aside to Green.*] I'm going to speak to Matilda for a few moments—if you wan't me, you'll find me there. Above all things, heed nothing that these scandal-mongers may say! [*Exit, R.*]

*Green.* Heed them, my dear! No more than I would the chattering of a nest of magpies! [*to DRAKE.*] What the deuce are you bobbing about there for, sir? Are you afraid I shall bite?

*Drake.* Well, there's no knowing what turn the thing may take! Will you allow me to have the pleasure of feeling your pulse?

*Green.* Ha! ha! What for? Do you see any symptoms of sickness about me?

*Drake.* Let me solemnly and seriously advise you to keep up your spirits!

*Green.* Ha! ha! Thank you for the hint! I'll endeavor to do so.

*Shadow.* Suffer me to congratulate you upon your equanimity!

*Green.* Sir, you're very kind! I believe I am generally in the same mood! Ha! ha!

*Drake.* Farewell, unhappy man!

*Green.* Unhappy! You croaking bull-frogs! [*DRAKE and SHADOW run off.*] Egad! if he hadn't dodged, I'd have given him cause to feel unhappy! How is this, nephew? Is a cheerful disposition so very unusual in your gloomy city, that a man is to be baited for it like a wild bull? What's the meaning of it?

*Smiler.* Alas, uncle, it grieves me most unfeignedly to say that there is a reason—a serious reason—for our sorrowful countenances!

*Green.* Oh! there is, is there? I'm delighted to hear it! I'll swear, now, the stock market is at the bottom of it!

*Smiler.* Worse, sir, worse! It's a delicate task, most delicate, but to whom could it be entrusted, if not to one whose near relationship, gives him, at least, the right to be sincere and honest, even at the risk of giving mortal offence!

*Green.* What a terrible exordium! And, pray, to whom does all this allude?

*Smiler.* Alas! sir, to you!



*Green.* To me?—Bravo! go on! this is delicious! Rosey's well, for I saw her a few moments ago, and as for the rest, pooh! [*aside.*]

*Smiler.* Pardon me, sir, and pray abate somewhat of this levity, or the reverse may be terrible! You know, sir, that I have ever entertained towards you the profoundest esteem and affection!

*Green.* As you have told me often, very often! Well?

*Smiler.* And must be assured that anything which touches your happiness, must endanger mine!

*Green.* Yes, yes, of course! Ha! ha! I can't help laughing at your face! Excuse me! there, I'm serious! so on, come to the point!

*Smiler.* Shall I be frank, it is my only course! I will!

*Green.* I would, if I were you!

*Smiler.* [*they sit.*] In a word, then, your wife—

*Green.* Is she ill?

*Smiler.* No, no, she is well enough, in health!

*Green.* Then all is well!

*Smiler.* Pardon me, uncle, all is not well! Hard as the task is which fatal circumstance imposes upon me, it is my painful duty to obscure the heaven of your seeming happiness, and clothe your very soul in gloom!

*Green.* Well, upon my life, and soul, nephew, that's very kind of you! But I'll give you, and your friend, Mr. Fatal Circumstance long odds, and bet you any amount that you won't do anything of the kind!

*Smiler.* It will be torture to me to undeceive you, but listen! First, let me ask you to prepare yourself for a fearful shock!

*Green.* There! I'm ready! my nerves are braced up! now for this moral shower bath!

*Smiler.* Wretched man! behold this letter! [*gives it.*]

*Green.* Why, it's in the hand-writing of my little Rosey! [*read's letter.*] Dear me! dear me! just like them! poor romantic creatures, full of hope, and poetry! Um, um! upon my life, a very nicely worded epistle, rather warm, but allowances must be made for the fervor of youth! Is this all you have to tell me about, nephew?

*Smiler.* All!

*Green.* Yes, all!

*Smiler.* Do you know to whom that is addressed?

*Green.* Why of course I do! to that scapegrace Wolfe!

*Smiler.* You know all about it then!

*Green.* You see I do! Ha! ha! now I think I may laugh, eh, nephew? What a wonderful fellow you are at hunting out secrets! Ha! ha! why, your face is longer than ever! There, I won't laugh at you any more! my dear nephew, I knew all about it, and that the fellow is somewhere about the neighborhood now. Is he respectable enough to ask him to dinner, eh?

*Smiler.* [*aside.*] Amazement! I trust, uncle, you don't think that any motive, but that of the profoundest regard for you, and the integrity of your honor, led me to—

*Green.* I know it, boy, I know it! There, be off, and don't pride yourself any more upon your superior penetration!

*Smiler.* Uncle, I am rejoiced at it exceedingly! It has removed a great load from my mind. [*aside.*] Dislike has swollen into hate! If there be a means within my grasp, I'll pluck her from him yet!

[*Exit* SMILER, C.

*Green.* Poor Smiler! It's really very kind of him to take so much interest about me, and my affairs! What a fuss they seem to make, all of them, because my darling Rosey happened to write a few silly letters, to a scamp who was unworthy of her! At all events I won't let it annoy me! She's full of concern, poor soul, because she didn't mention it to me before. Perhaps it would have been better had she done so, but I suppose, like myself, she didn't think it of sufficient consequence until these fault-finders worried her! Oh! city! city! what a colony of human buzzards thou art! Rosey and I had better pack up, and be off, while we have any character left! [*Exit*, 2 E. R.

SMILER watches him off, then enters with WOLFE, C.

*Smiler.* Come in! In this room we shall not be interrupted.

*Wolfe.* You are really very obliging! If you have no objection, I'll sit down. [*sits.*] Not having much to occupy my mind this morning, I took a holiday, promenaded through the principal streets, amongst the gay butterflies of fashion, met numbers of my old friends, whom the blaze of my attire struck with sudden blindness! Ha! ha! I took a strange delight in forcing them to know and speak to me. You would have laughed to see my gravity and their despair—to see those sleek and elegantly clothed friends, shrinking from my rags, as though each rent let out a plague!

*Smiler.* Pray make yourself at home, I beg.

*Wolfe.* Such is my intention, worthy sir! Your hospitality equals the beauty of your establishment! Upon my life I wouldn't at all mind taking up a permanent abode with you.

*Smiler.* Indeed!

*Wolfe.* Ha! ha! I read your thoughts. You'd scarcely like to introduce me to your wealthy friends, in this free and independent holiday attire. Pshaw! Tell them I'm an eccentric millionaire, and they'll look upon each rag as cloth of gold!

*Smiler.* Enough! and let's to business. You have a secret?

*Wolfe.* Yes—to sell! Will you bid for it?

*Smiler.* Nobly, if it should be to my wish, or could be warped so.

*Wolfe.* Ha! then my market's made! Shall I produce the goods?

*Smiler.* Stay! we must have some wine. [*rings bell.*] You don't object?

*Wolfe.* Not I, upon my word!

*Enter* JAMES, C.

*Smiler.* Bring some madeira, James.

*Wolfe.* Hold, one moment! Might I venture to suggest brandy? [*Exit* JAMES, C.] And now, my princely purchaser, let us negotiate! *Imprimis!*

*Smiler.* One moment! This is my daughter's apartment, and there may be listeners! Caution is never thrown away.

[*Examines room, &c.*

*Wolfe.* Ha! ha! That's your affair. I care not how many ears are glued against the key-holes.

*Enter JAMES. C., with brandy, wine, &c., &c.; he places them on table, and exits, c.*

*Smiler.* Now, my friend!

*Wolfe.* Friend! Ha! ha! Well, never mind, it's only so much unexpensive breath! [*fills.*] Ha! that has somewhat of the old flavor. It steals along the vitiated palate, like the vision of a long-forgotten joy, upon a world-clouded memory,—sweet, but fleeting. You see, sir, what a moralist I am! [*drinks.*] Ah! it's gone. I knew it would be so. There was a time when I could roll the delicatest vintage around my tongue, and smack my lips upon its after-taste, affect the connoisseur, and tell its very date; knew to the faintest breath of a bouquet, each individual perfume, from the rough port that tears the throats of British country gentlemen, to the ethereal Burgundy, whose subtle and delicious essence 'scapes even in the sipping! [*drinks.*] Pshaw! this is worse than useless. My craving appetite is only mocked by such weak compounds. Give me brandy!

*Smiler.* Here it is, if you prefer it; drink freely—it is of good quality.

*Wolfe.* You answer to my wish with devilish eagerness. You'd fain unloose my tongue, methinks. Ha! ha! the rust is too thick upon it. My prudent self is rather doubtful of its drunken exaggeration, and doubly locks my lips upon all secrets; so, if you are for business, let's about it now. [*drinks.*

*Smiler.* Well, be it so—not that the business, as you call it, is of much importance.

*Wolfe.* That's a lie! Come, come, don't frown! You know it is, and I've no time for compliments! [*drinks.*] Ha! That brandy has the true devil in its stinging fire! It rushes against my cloyed palate like a surging wave of joy! Give me a moment to feel it! [*drinks.*] Ha! I can taste that—it's real, tangible—thrills through my nerves, and hangs like a golden mist before my eyes, through which the world looks glorious! Too brief, too brief! The clouds are leaden grey already! Come, potent wizard, raise that spell once more! Prudence! prudence! Now, let's talk, and to the purpose!

*Smiler.* Then, in two words—those letters!—

*Wolfe.* Are here! [*SMILER snatches at them.*] Nay, not so fast!

*Smiler.* Fear not, my friend, you'll find that I'm an honorable man!

*Wolfe.* Oh! I can see that at a glance! Most honorable! So am I, therefore I'll drink your health, and you shall drink mine, and then you'll return thanks for the honor—and we shall both lie socially, according to established usage! Come, my head is failing fast! What will you give for the merchandize?

*Smiler.* May I not peruse them first?

*Wolfe.* No! If you fling any gross, peddling, petti-fogging trade



craft into the grand villany, you'll not do for my market! There's the crushing of a mortal soul—such a soul—within this hand—the confident outpourings of an angel's heart, that deemed itself then fitly mated! The arch tempter plucked me down from the seraphic height, where she remains—remains, but not for ever! No! She must descend as well! There would be a fierce, devilish joy in dragging her down—down to the level of my base companionship! Ha! ha! Come, bid—bid boldly!

*Smiler.* It's really very awkward—

*Wolfe.* And unbusiness-like, eh! You'd have me name a price! Well—[*SMILER leans forward anxiously*—Ha! ha! Strange fancies will cross one's brain at times. Through the haze of my drunkenness, you looked as though you were the enemy of man, bargaining for the reversion of some poor sinner's soul! How do I know you are not? What do you want with these letters?

*Smiler.* If you hate this woman as intensely as I do, I can trust you!

*Wolfe.* You hate her with a hate like mine? Pshaw! Man, you never loved her! You did not find the treasure that you deemed locked up within your heart, rent from you in an instant—gone—gone for ever! You know not what it is to plunge madly into a dismal sea of vice, in the vain effort to extinguish that one burning thought! No, no! You have ends and aims, ambition and a future, to divide your hate! I have none of those! My life stood still even upon that spot, where I had lost its spring and motive for existence! All since was chance. The present and the to-come, I know not, heed not—all is merged in that one-absorbing memory, and memory is hate!

*Smiler.* These letters, then, will argue her weak, fond, confiding, loving!

*Wolfe.* Even so! She did love me then! Oh! the agony of that thought! Have a care!

*Smiler.* But could not they be twisted to express a something stronger and more definite?

*Wolfe.* A shame, as well as folly? It were a great revenge! Backed by my word, they could.

*Smiler.* Such vengeance would be worth a sturdy oath or two!

*Wolfe.* Pshaw! a score!

*Enter at back GREENLEAF, DRAKE, SHADOW and ROSE—they listen.*

*Smiler.* And thou couldst swear that Rose was false?

*Wolfe.* Aye! I'll swear it!

*Rose.* [*screams.*] Heaven help me!

*Smiler.* You may keep your letters, friend.

*Wolfe.* Oh! villain!

[*Tableau.*]

## ACT V.

SCENE.—*Smiler's Drawing-Room, elegantly furnished.—Two Drawing-Room Screens.*

*Enter GREENLEAF and SMILER, I E. R.*

*Smiler.* My dear uncle, this terrible shock has overwhelmed us all fearfully!

*Green.* Be silent! let me not hear the sound of a human voice—it's hateful to me!—even your's, nephew—so kind, so very kind as you have been, and so considerate, to ward off and break gently to me this terrible calamity. Rose! darling Rose!—bear with me, nephew—to you I shrink not from showing the heart-agony which I endure—but don't think that I shall let the brutal world behold my weakness. I have strength enough to conceal my torture from the obscene harpies to whom it would be a welcome feast. But the laugh is quenched within me now, nephew—I shall never smile again!—never! never!

*Smiler.* Say not so, dear uncle! Time, the great consoler, will yet visit you with some share of content. Remember, you are not to blame. The shadow of the guiltiness should not reach your heart; besides, dear uncle, there are others, whose claims upon your love—

*Green.* None, now, but you, nephew,—my good, kind friend!

*Smiler.* And, although Rose—

*Green.* Silence! nephew—in mercy, silence! you tear the wound afresh—most cruelly. As you may value my small chance of after quiet, mention not her name, or by the remotest shadow of a hint, allude to what has passed! The monument to my departed happiness must be erected from my own griefs, and none shall presume to share them with me. She is no more to me—never can a thought of her inhabit my heart again—never shall her name—oh! fool! fool! then shall I never breathe, or move, or think, for she was life—is life still—despite of all! Rose! Rose! unkind, ungrateful, see what you have done!

*[sits in arm-chair, R. II.*

*Smiler.* Ah! she is much to blame!

*Green.* You mustn't say so!—I won't hear it! Have I not told you that I am selfish in my misery! No one must accuse her in my hearing—none can do so long; for once away from the accursed city, I'll never look upon the face of man again! I dare not; for I should fancy scorn in every eye, or what is more to be feared than scorn, obtrusive pity. No, no—let me gather up the few mementoes of my wretchedness, and begone anywhere—the stranger still the better! *[taking out portrait.]* See, nephew, this is her miniature! Look at those features! Who would believe that angel smile was devilish mockery! Would you not gage the safety of your everlasting soul upon the sinlessness of the volume to which that face is the title-page! It cannot be! Nephew, we have been too hasty! There is some great deception, is there not?

*Smiler.* My dear, injured friend, with my whole heart I wish that I could give you even the slight consolation of a hope!

*Green.* My poor, poor Rose! You see, in spite of all, I cannot shut my heart against her, for when I call for curses, pity comes instead! I search for bitter hate, and find nothing, nothing but continued and abiding love!

*Smiler.* Oh, what a heart to be thus sacrificed!

*Enter* WIDOW, L. E. R.

*Widow.* Ah! I'm glad you're here, both of you. I've been looking for you—I have something to say to you.

*Smiler.* [*aside.*] What the devil does this woman want?

*Widow.* You'll have to excuse me, if my remarks should appear slightly unceremonious, but you know I always say what I mean!

*Smiler.* My dear madam, permit me to suggest that my uncle is not in a frame of mind, at present, to meet society!

*Widow.* I should suppose not! He's preparing for a lunatic asylum, I most sincerely hope!

*Smiler.* A lunatic asylum, madam?

*Widow.* A lunatic asylum. I repeat it, for lunacy is the only reasonable excuse he can offer for his great folly!

*Smiler.* My dear uncle, allow me to see you to your own apartment. This extraordinary lady will pardon us if——

*Widow.* One moment, if you please. I haven't done with you yet! You know that I generally speak my mind pretty plainly.

*Smiler.* I know, madam, that an indulgent community allows you that license, but it may be over-stepped.

*Widow.* Oh! certainly, I'm aware that it's highly injudicious and unfashionable to speak the truth, but I can't see a dreadful wrong done without endeavoring to right it, and what's more, I won't!

*Smiler.* Pray, madam, to whom and to what, do you allude?

*Widow.* To you, sir, and to the scheme which you have so nearly completed, but which I shall bring to a sudden termination!

*Smiler.* Have a care, Madam! You shall be held legally responsible for your observations!

*Widow.* Pshaw! Big words don't frighten me! As for you, sir, [*crosses to GREEN.*] you had better go at once to your wife, and beg her pardon for this day's work, if you don't want to add the recollection of an innocent heart foully slandered to death, amongst the pleasant memories this gentleman is accumulating for you!

*Green.* Slander! Death! You thrill and terrify me at the same instant! Nephew, nephew, if we do judge wrongly, hastily, repentance for us lies not within the range of hope!

*Smiler.* My dear sir, these women invariably assist each other! You heard with your own ears——

*Green.* True, true! Hush! No more!

*Smiler.* [*going with GREEN.*] Heaven knows how gladly I would minister to your crushed heart, but false hope would only lead you deeper into despair!

[*Exeunt*, R. L. E.]

*Widow.* Foolish, weak old man! you will repent this when it's too late—you will, be sure, with bitter tears! He won't hear me!



That there's a devilish plot, I know, but unfortunately have no power to penetrate it!

*Enter L. H. arch, WYNDHAM, MATILDA and SHADOW, quarreling—WYNDHAM in dressing-gown—has pipe, &c.*

*Widow.* Why, children, what's the matter now?

*Matil.* I don't love him a bit, and I won't live with him any longer, that's what I won't! He's a tyrant, and a savage, and—and I'll go—go to my mama.

*Wynd.* You may go where you like, madame, but I will be master in my own house, I mean apartment—it's all the same!

*Matil.* You shan't!

*Wynd.* I shall!

*Drake.* Dear me, how dreadful! Can I suggest—

*Shadow.* Can I advise!

*Wynd.* I'll trouble you not to interfere between man and wife, sir!

[to *Drake*.

*Drake.* Oh! I beg you ten thousand—[to *Tilda*.] Be spirited, remember woman's rights!

*Shadow.* [To *Wynd*.] Be firm now, or she'll wear the thingamies, irrevocably!

*Matil.* [going to c.] I'll have you to know, sir, that women are no longer to be considered as nothing in the social scale! We have our privileges as well as you! Nature has given man no monopoly of brains! Our rights must be respected, and our oppression cease!

*Widow.* Dear me! what strong minded oration has the child been reading? My poor dear girl, those rhapsodies only proceed from a few mannish individuals, sprinkled here and there amongst our sex! And with great justice let me tell you, for a few such masculine women are needed, to counterbalance the gossiping, tale bearing, mischievous male things, one occasionally meets in the other.

*Drake.* Very true! Eh, *Shadow*?

*Shadow.* Distinctly, my opinion exactly!

*Widow.* Come, come, *Wynny*, Kiss and be friends!

*Wynd.* Not a bit of it! Let her come to me, that's my right!

*Matil.* I won't do anything of the kind, that's my pleasure!

*Wynd.* Serves me right for marrying a baby!

*Matil.* And me for accepting a boy!

*Wynd.* Boy, madame!

*Matil.* Baby, sir!

*Widow.* Come, come, children!

*Wynd and Matil.* Children, indeed!

*Wynd.* Don't be insolent, madame!

*Matil.* Call my husband, a child!

*Widow.* Bless me! I forgot—I really have to apologise! There are no children now! What's the cause of your dispute?

*Matil.* He will smoke that dreadful pipe! He's fonder of it than he is of me, I know!

*Drake.* [to *Wynd*.] Every man of spirit smokes when and where he pleases!

*Shadow.* [to MATILDA.] No lady would allow such a thing in her presence!

*Drake.* [to WYND.] Stick to your fumigator!

*Shadow.* [to MATILDA.] Banish him to the basement!

*Widow.* Ah! my dear girl, be advised by a woman of experience. Never notice small faults, or they may grow into vices. It is only through opposition that ill conduct thrives, but the rare and delicate flower that blossoms into domestic happiness, must be mutually nurtured!

*Drake.* Bless me! How remarkably arcadian!

*Shadow.* Delicious admixture of poetry and polyanthus!

*Matil.* [to WIDOW.] What would you have me do?

*Widow.* Only a little concession now, to ensure a great recompense to come! Remember, my dear, this is the first chapter of a book, which is to contain the records of a life time, and with yourselves it rests whether it is to be a volume of joy or sorrow!

*Wynd.* Mrs. Lyttle Wyndham, since it's your intention to gratify our friends with these amiable ebullitions of temper, I shall relieve you of the annoyance of my presence! I'm going out!

*Matil.* Out, sir?

*Wynd.* Out, Mrs. Lyttle Wyndham, if you have no objections! Au revoir, good people! Tol, lol. [Exit, humming an air, 2 E. R.]

*Matil.* Now, am I not justified in calling myself the most miserable creature on the face of the earth?

*Drake.* Unendurable conduct!

*Shadow.* Atrocious!

*Widow.* And yet the remedy is in your own hands!

*Matil.* Point out the way, and I'll travel hundreds of miles to accomplish it!

*Widow.* You needn't travel quite so far, my love. Just go to your husband's room—tell him you repent the childishness of your conduct—for you know it was childish.

*Drake.* I don't think that advisable.

*Shadow.* So very unusual.

*Drake.* And undignified.

*Matil.* Now, do you know that never once occurred to me. I've a great mind to do as you tell me, only he'll think he has conquered.

*Widow.* Let him think so,—you will have achieved a greater conquest than he; you will have triumphed over the stubbornness of your own character, and, in the end, that must conquer him.

*Matil.* I'll go!—I will, and thank you a thousand times for putting it in my mind. I feel now that I am doing rightly, and it gives me both courage and delight, whatever may be the result.

[Exit, 2 E. L., DRAKE and SHADOW, telegraphing.]

*Drake.* You're a wonderful woman, widow, but it's all useless.

*Shadow.* Prodigious! but it won't do.

*Drake.* Those youngsters won't be together a month.

*Shadow.* I give them three weeks.

*Drake.* However, your exertions are praiseworthy, and we will report you. Ha! ha!

*Shadow.* Favorably. Ha! ha!

*Widow.* Stay, I'm going out—won't you take me with you?

*Shadow.* You don't say you'll go with Drake?

*Drake.* Ain't you afraid to be seen with him?

*Widow.* Not a bit! I'm not afraid of either of you. Everybody knows you are dangerous,—therein lies the safety. Ships can sail round exposed rocks,—it's the sunken ones that do the mischief.

*Drake.* Rather a rap at my friend, Shadow.

*Shadow.* I wonder how Drake liked that? [*Exeunt omnes, L. 1 E.*]

*Enter ROSE, 2 E. R.*

*Rose.* Not here, not here. Could I but see him. Oh! yes; 'tis some good angel that inspires me, for my denial must outweigh the lying breath of that revengeful man. I will know the worst, Adam! my husband—heaven! I shall go mad—the blackest certainty would be more easy to endure than this brain-sickening suspense. I will see him; and yet, how can I dare to look upon him, tainted as I am by that foul pestilence, suspicion? What shall I do? what shall I do? I vainly strive to think that there is strength in innocence; but to be pointed at and shunned—to feel that every eye regards me with an insolent or pitying glance. Alas! the consciousness of truth and honor is but a poor defence against the scorn of an uncharitable world, and that I am not all guiltless, is the greatest sting.

*Enter MRS. SMILER, 1 E. R.*

Ah! you are here—welcome, most welcome. It is like a beam of sunlight to behold a friendly face. Advise me what to do, for I am distracted! Oh! the fatal consequence of that one indiscretion.

*Mrs. S.* My dear girl, you attach too much importance to the affair altogether. Believe me, if you remain quietly by yourself, for a few days, it will all blow over.

*Rose.* Had I not better see him now, and seek an explanation, for I know not of what I am accused.

*Mrs. S.* A mere nothing, dear, which his ill-temper has exaggerated! If I were you, I'd treat both him and his ill-humor with the utmost coolness. You mustn't yield too much to these male creatures, for they are cruelly monopolizing. He'll soon be suing for pardon himself—let me but pave the way for you.

*Rose.* Will you? Ah! you give me fresh life!

*Enter JAMES, 3 E. R. arch.*

*James.* [*To ROSE.*] Mr. Greenleaf wishes to see you, madam, in his room.

*Rose.* See me! Thank heaven! Instantly, James, instantly!

[*Going.*]

*Mrs. S.* [*staying her.*] Are you mad? I will not allow you to ruin yourself! Are you prepared to meet brutality and harshness? James, tell Mr. Greenleaf, that Mrs. Greenleaf presents her respectful compliments, but is too much indisposed to see anybody.

*Rose.* No, no! my heart revolts at such a message!



*Mrs. S. Go, James!* [*Exit, JAMES*] I know better how to manage him than you do! If you'll take my advice, you'll receive him here, and with proper pride. Remember, dear, courage, dignity, and coolness, and he'll be vanquished! I'll prepare him for the interview. Now to lay a train that will accomplish all we seek! [*aside.*

[*Exit, R. 3 E.*

*Rose.* Heaven grant it may be so! for this anguish and incertitude is more than I can bear!

[*Throws herself in Chair—resting her arms on Table. There is a Screen interposes between her and the Table to which SMILER and WOLFE, who enter R. 3 L., go.*

*Wolfe.* [*on entering.*] I say, I'll have no more of it!

*Smiler.* [*ROSE starts and listens.*] Speak in a lower tone—do you want all the house to hear you?

*Wolfe.* Aye! Would that the assembled world could listen to the agony of my remorse! Malicious, petty-bargaining tempter! when I entered this place, clothed in the majesty of my own revenge, I felt a devil's pride in the fierce joy of lowering her's! But you, with your huxtering chicanery, filched the triumph from me, and lavished it upon your own selfish interests! But it shall not be! I'll force you to unsay the foul lie, into whose confirmation I was tricked! The vastness of your infamy, has shown me as in a mirror, the enormity of my own, and, thank, heaven! not too late. Breathe but a syllable against her innocence and sacred truth, and I stand ready to reveal the heartless plot, through which you meant to compass her destruction!

*Smiler.* Ha! ha! It is too late, my conscientious friend! You have done enough, for which I thank you, and shall reward you liberally!

*Wolfe.* Have a care, sir! Life is valueless to me—if it be worth any thing to you, beware of mockery! There's danger in it. [*crosses R.*

*Smiler.* My good friend, you misconceive me strangely! I simply acknowledge the service you have rendered me, and shall—

*Wolfe.* Silence! I tell you this shameful deed must not be done!

*Smiler.* It is done, my good friend, and nothing can undo it now!

*Wolfe.* Why do I hesitate to choke the lie within your craven throat!

*Smiler.* Because it would do no good! The lie is not in my possession only—your liberality gave it to the world, through most industrious tongues, and the testimony of angels could not shake it now!

*Enter GREENLEAF—ROSE restrains him with a gesture of caution.*

*Wolfe.* Can nothing move you? Nothing!

*Smiler.* No more than the unflinching rock is moved, when fretful waves against it's summit dash themselves to pieces!

*Wolfe.* Then, by that purity which we have mutually outraged, I dedicate the remnant of my life to you! Irrevocable as doom itself, I'll hang upon your footsteps, and shout out your infamy in every ear! at home or abroad, by night and by day, like a baleful shadow, you shall find me ever by your side, until, laden with obloquy, men shall avoid you like a living pestilence!

*Smiler.* Ha! a straight waistcoat, and enforced ablution would soon remedy that!

*Wolfe.* Villain! But mark me—retribution will come, and when you least expect it!

*Smiler.* [*Rapidly, with energy and rage for the first time.*] Go! go, prating vagrant! I despise, defy you! I am not a child to be affrighted by mouthfuls of air! Who will believe your testimony? None! You don't know me, sir! Pity cannot sway me, nor compunction bid me stop! She was in my way, and like a noxious insect, I have crushed her, by a lie, I own—not mine, but yours! I had the cunning to extract it from you, to make you the tool of my revenge, when you thought you were accomplishing your own! Behold the glory of my triumph! Although she is angel innocent, yet not all heaven's thunders can persuade her husband but that she is doubly dyed in guilt!

[*Rose dashes the Screen aside, and denounces him—Enter at top, L. W., DRAKE, SHADOW and WIDOW.*

[*Tableau.—Rose falls into arms of GREENLEAF—WOLFE drops on his knees, and buries his face in his hands in Chair.*

*Green.* Rose! My angel wife! Darling, look up! [*to SMILER.*] Slanderous scorpion! you have stung yourself!

*Smiler.* [*slightly astonished.*] Who has done this? You, or you? What devil has interfered? Oh, I shall have such revenge upon you all! I'm faint—confused! Let me collect myself! I can explain all, uncle!

*Green.* Hence from my sight, viper! I can't look at you—Go! and never dare to call me by that name again! Rose, darling, one word, one little word, so that it be of forgiveness!

*Rose.* Dear, dear husband! Nothing have I to forgive, but you, much, much!

*Drake.* Hem! Smiler, I'm sorry to place an additional weight upon a sinking man's shoulders, but are you aware of the fact, that the indispensable functionary, the sheriff, is down stairs?

*Shadow.* With a body-guard of bailiffs!

*Enter GRIMM, L. 1 E.*

*Grimm.* It's come at last!

*Smiler.* What! speak out! A pint of water pitched upon a drowning wretch, won't sink him any quicker? What has come?

*Grimm.* The crisis! The house of Smiler, Grimm, and co. is added up, and carried over to the account of smash! [*Exit, L. 1 E.*

*Smiler.* Well! what are you staring at, all of you? I have played the Game of Life boldly, and have lost! The world is wide enough for me to live in, without rubbing shoulders against any here! For you, it will satisfy the bitterness of my hate, to know, that I have tainted the atmosphere of your happiness, with the quick spreading poison of suspicion, and to the charitable world, the doubt will be a certainty! Ha! ha! though my bite has not been mortal, it has left some venom in the wound! [*Exit SMILER, L. followed by GRIMM.*

*Green.* [*after a pause offers his hand to WOLFE.*] Sir, your hand!

The great good which you have just done, most amply atones for all of evil that has gone before! It is not for weak and fallible humanity to judge his fellow, or say, that circumstanced alike, he would have acted otherwise! You have restored to me my wife—her purity and truth established beyond a doubt! Exposed, and foiled the machinations of my subtle enemy, and to my dying hour, I'll bless you, from my heart, from my heart!

*They retire up—Enter MATILDA and WYNDHAM, arm in arm.*

*Matil.* [to WIDOW.] I've taken your advice, widow, and see the result! We're never going to quarrel any more! I intend, for the future, to like whatever he likes, and hate whatever he hates! I wont scold any more, and he may smoke, whenever, and wherever, he pleases!

*Wynd.* And, therefore, I have given it up altogether. I find, widow that you, women, have a stronger weapon than opposition; and that mildness, gentleness, and persuasion, can make us men do just as you please.

*Widow.* Now, that's as it should be, and I congratulate every one present upon the prospect of increased wisdom and happiness.

*Green.* Yes, widow, and I hope that some gossippy friends of ours, that I know of, have seen too evidently the fearful effects of slander, to aid in diffusing her poison through society any more.

*Shadow.* Poor Drake! he'll never get over that.

*Drake.* Rather a stinger for friend Shadow!

*Wolfe.* [To ROSE.] And thou, so foully injured, and yet so deserving! May I dare to lift these sinful eyes to thine, and meet not my true recompense, contempt, and scorn? That I may not live as I have lived, part demon, ah! be thou all angel still, and breathe the breath of new-born joy within my breast, upon that blessed word, *Forgiveness!*

[GREENLEAF passes ROSE to WOLFE; she extends her hand, which he presses to his lips, kneeling.]

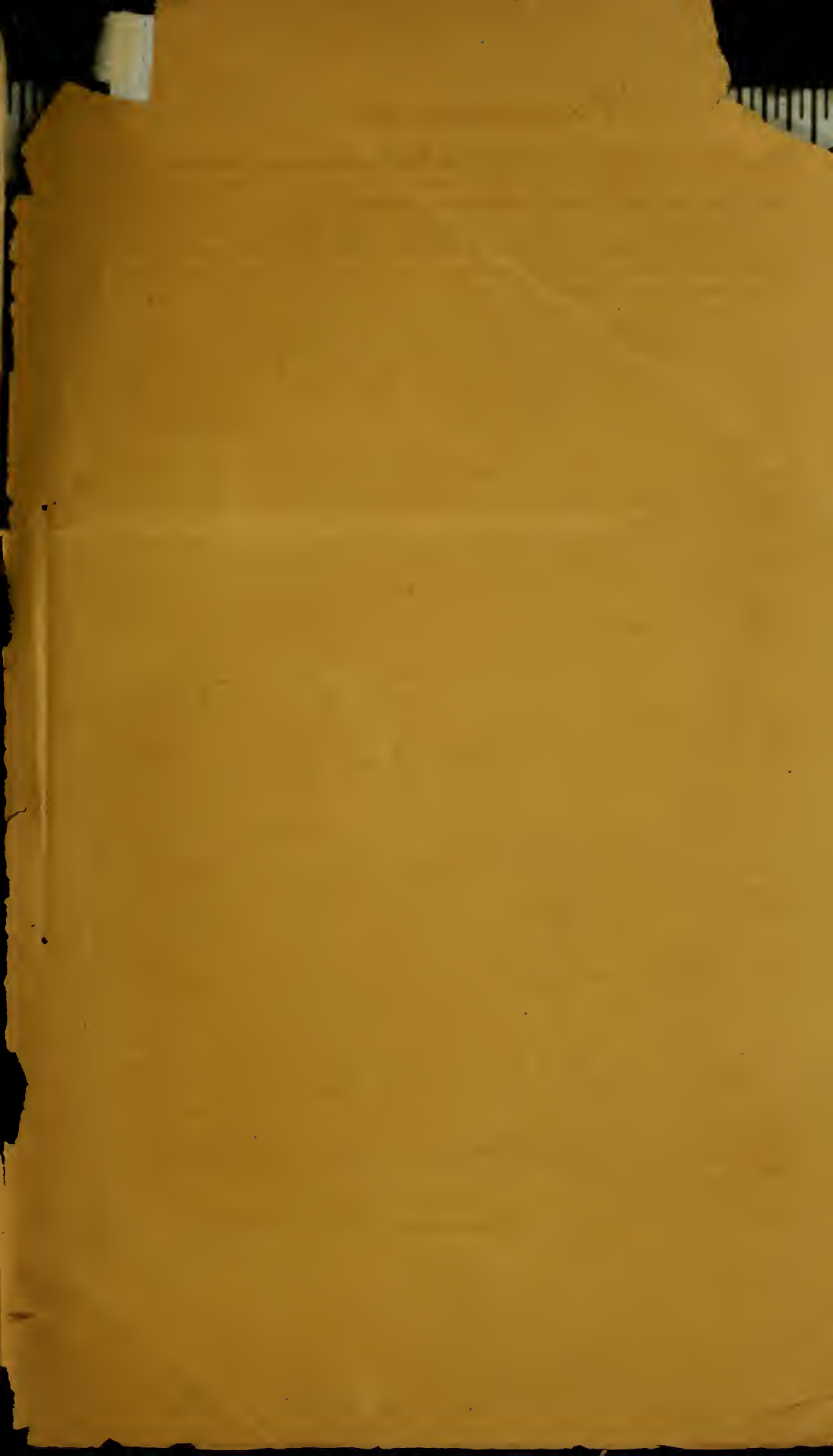
*Rose.* I do forgive you, Rupert—freely—fully! and, the reality of your amendment being manifest, with my own repentant prayers, shall be forever joined sincerest wishes for your future welfare.

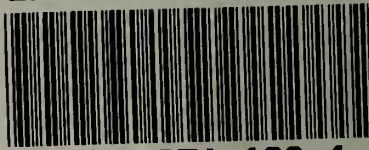
*Wolfe.* [ardently.] These tears of mingled penitence and joy are all the thanks I have to give; but they are proofs how deep and earnest are the feelings of my changed heart. A few moments since, and the world, to me, was naught; the miserably-wasted past, and the all-dreaded time to come, quenched in the mad extinction of the passing hour. But now, the long, long melancholy night begins to break away, and morning dawns at last, with the inspiring thought—*I have a Future!* For as benignant heaven imprints upon the darkest shadow of the storm passed over, its own all glorious arch of promise, so does its greater mercy, beaming on man's repentant tears, light up the blackest clouds of retrospection with the soul's bright rainbow—*Hope!*

CURTAIN.

THE END.







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